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LITURGY

EDITORIAL

ANAMNETIC AND EPICLETIC SYNTHESIS OF
EAST SYRIAN THEOLOGY OF ELECTIONARY

THE GENUINE

DID APOSTLE

CHALDEAN? 7

OF JESUS?

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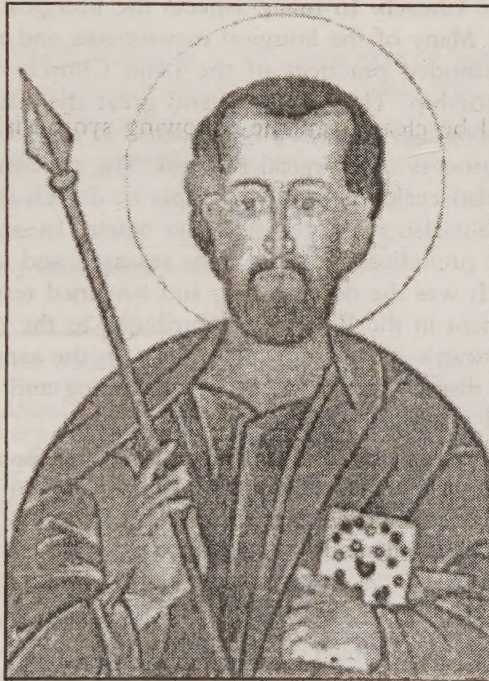
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My Lord and My God



Oh St. Thomas, the Apostle of India,

*receive on the day of your martyrdom,
the succulent fruits and fragrant flowers of this ecclesial tree
which you have planted in the soil of India.*

*Fervent festal greetings to everyone of our readers
and well-wishers on the
Dukrana of St. Thomas!*

EDITORIAL

The process of the liturgical restoration and renewal in the Syro-Malabar Church may be compared to the work of the legendary man who is never tired of rolling a huge stone up to the mountain and sees to it that every evening the same stone is rolled back to the foothill. Concrete directives from the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and the deliberations of the SM synod produced little or no result at all in the overall liturgical scenario of the Church. In many aspects the liturgical restoration has not attained the desired goals. Many of the liturgical experiments and reforms ended up either in appropriation of outmoded practices of the Latin Church or servile imitation and syncretism of Hindu worship. The visionary and great theologian of the SM Church Placid J. Podipara had long ago predicted this malaise in case of the lack of established principles guiding the process of liturgical renewal. The problem in the SM Church is not only liturgical but also ecclesiological. Attempts to detach the Church from its historical and theological but also make the situation worse. In order to come out of the prisons of the inherited prejudices we need joint research and open discussions on the Church and her liturgy. It was the decades-long and sustained research of the proponents of the Liturgical Movement in the West that contributed to the new awareness of liturgy expressed in the 2nd Vatican's constitution on liturgy. In the same way only clearheaded and constant study can dispel the fog of misunderstanding and expedite the process of genuine restoration and renewal of our Church's liturgy.

The contribution of this issue of Christian Orient is a positive step in this regard. The first article by J. Moolen is a felt-needed study of the East Syrian lectionary. Especially in the wake of the making of an alternative calendar in the SM Church the present authentic study is very useful. In many cases the experimented new calendar distorted the whole logic and theology of the East Syrian lectionary. J. Moolen explains the rationale behind the set up of the East Syrian liturgical seasons and the anamnestic and epicletic synthesis of the whole paschal mystery expressed in each season of our liturgical year. His contribution undoubtedly helps us to make balanced experiments on calendar in the future.

The article of Robert Mathews helps us to understand the historical and theological background of the SM liturgy. The reluctance to accept the historical truth of the East Syrian liturgy in our Church is the real stumbling block to appreciate the Eastern heritage of many centuries in our Church. Robert Mathews' contribution poses new challenges to those who often convert the genuine Christian liturgies to non-Christian liturgies in the guise of inculturation.

Finally, the short but enlightening contribution of G. Kaniarakath invites the readers to distinguish the true Johannine picture of St. Thomas, the true 'believer' and 'confessor' from the widespread "doubting Thomas," in the early patristic and iconographic traditions.

Let us hope that these studies will shed new light into a better understanding and appreciation of our authentic liturgical and spiritual heritage.

Editor

ANAMNETIC AND EPICLETIC SYNTHESIS OF EAST SYRIAN THEOLOGY OF LECTIONARY

Rev. Dr. John Moolan

The Origins

The East Syrian Church Calendar in its entire plan of lectionary system, explicates the coherence of Passover mysteries fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Thus the whole system represents anamnetically the call of Jesus to re-enact his salvation mysteries as present realities in our lives, and gives epicletically guidelines for a good conduct of Christian life. For this purpose the whole lectionary has theologically and liturgically been well arranged in a framework of *Units* (weeks), *Systems* (seasons) and *Scheme* (year). The entire Scheme (year) has nine systems (seasons) with seven units (weeks) each.¹

¹ The present lectionary is the work of great liturgical reformer Iso-Yahb III, the patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (647-657). Before him there existed two lectionaries such as the monastic usage developed in the Upper Monastery (*Deir Alleita*) known also as the Monastery of Mar Abraham and Mar Gabriel, the first superiors of this monastery, situated on the upper bank of river Tigris in Mosul (for this lectionary, see A. J. Maclean, *East Syrian Daily Offices*, London 1894, 264-81), and the cathedral usage developed in the patriarchal church of Kokhe in Seleucia (for this lectionary, see W. F. Macomber, "The Chaldean Lectionary System of the cathedral church of Kokhe", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 33 (1967) 495-512). In the year 650/51, Iso-Yahb III with the help of Hnaniso, the monk of *Beth Abhe*, compiled these two usage into one lectionary system for the use of East Syrian Church. He fixed distinctive rules and regulations for the arrangement of Old and New Testament lessons in liturgical celebrations; cf. A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur mit Ausschluss des christlich-palästinensischen Textes*, Bonn 1922, 197-98; Id., *Nichtevangelische syrische Perikopenordnungen der ersten Jahrtausands*, Liturgiegeschichtliche Forschungen 15, Munich 1922, 70-77; Van Unnik (ed. & tr.), *Nestorian Questions on the Administration of the Eucharist*, by Iso-Yahb IV, Haarlem 1937, 147-50; J. M. Fie, "Iso-Yahb le Grand", *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 36 (1970) 10-13; J. Mateos, "L'office divin chez les chaldéens", in *La prière des heures* (ed. Cassien & B. Botte), Lex Orandi 35, Paris 1963, 255f; Id., *Lelya-Sapra*, Rome 1972, 27; W. Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature*, Amsterdam 1966, 174; P. Kannookadan, *The East Syrian Lectionary*, Rome 1991, 160-62.

The first revision of this lectionary was done in the Upper Monastery around 1250; cf. G. P. Badger, *The Nestorians and their Rituals*, vol. 2, London 1852, 22; D. G. Bickel, *Conceptus rei Syrorum literariae*, Munich 1871, 88; A. Rücker, "Das Obere Kloster bei Mossul und seine Bedeutung für die Geschichte der ostsyrischen Liturgie", *Oriens Christianus* III/7(1932)181, note 2.

The last revision was made by Paul Bedjan in 1886-87; cf. *Breviarium juxta Ritus Syrorum Orientalium id est Chaldaeorum*, 3 vols., Rome 1939. This revision was in accordance with the decision of Alquosh Synod at Ramban Hormizd Monastery (1853) to remove Nestorian theological errors from liturgy; cf. J. M. Vosté (ed.), *Chaldei-diritto nuovo: les actes du synode Chaldéen célébré au Couvent de Rabban Hormizd près d'Alquoch du 7 au 21 Juin 1853*, Fondi codificazione canonica orientale 2/17, Vatican 1942, 68-69. The excerpt of lectionary from the revised work of P. Bedjan, was later published by the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, for the use of the Malabar Church; cf. *Ordo Celebrationis "Quddasa" iuxta usum ecclesiae Syro-Malabarensis*, Rome 1959, 43-70; *Supplementum Mysteriorum sive proprium missarum de tempore et de sanctis iuxta ritum Ecclesiae Syro-Malabarensis* (propers for holy *Qurbana*), Rome 1960.

Systems (Seasons)		Scheme (Year)		Units (Weeks/Sundays)
1. Annunciation-Nativity	→	Nov., Dec., Jan.	←	4+2
2. <i>Denha</i>	→	Jan., Feb., March	←	7
3. Great Fast	→	Feb., March, April	←	7
4. Resurrection	→	March, April, May	←	7
5. <i>Sleeħa</i>	→	May, June, July	←	7
6. <i>Qaiṯha</i>	→	July, Aug., Sept.	←	7
7. <i>Elia-Sleeħa</i>	→	Aug., Sept., Oct.	←	7
8. Moses	→	Oct., Nov.	←	7
9. Dedication of the Church	→	Oct., Nov.	←	4

Except for the periods of Annunciation and Dedication of the Church, the main flow of the calendar is the seven weeks in every season. The arrangement of four weeks in the beginning and the end of the liturgical year is done for maintaining the seven weeks' principle in other seasons. Except for Great Fast, Resurrection and *Sleeħa* (Apostle), the other seasons do not practically get seven weeks in calendar. This is because the division of the liturgical year is based on the movable date of Easter and the fixed date of September 14, the Exaltation of the Cross. Therefore there is the need of adjustment of weeks in certain seasons in order to maintain the annual cycling of the year. George of Arbel explains the importance of the seven weeks' principle in the East Syrian Calendar. According to him the number seven here explains the significance of seven Sundays in salvation history. Following are the seven Sunday events enumerated by him indicating seven new beginnings:²

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. "Beginning of creation (Gen 1:3-5) | = The beginning of the world |
| 2. Dedication of the tent of testimony by Moses (Ex 40:17) | = The beginning of law and sacrifice that safeguard humanity |
| 3. Annunciation to Mary (Lk 1:26f) ³ | = The beginning of God with us |
| 4. Resurrection (Jn 20:1f) | = The beginning of future eternal life |
| 5. Resurrection experience of Apostle Thomas (Jn 20:26f) | = The beginning of faith in the risen Lord |
| 6. Pentecost (Acts 2:1f) | = The beginning of the working of the Holy Spirit |
| 7. Our own resurrection (the second coming of the Lord) ⁴ | = The beginning of entry to an everlasting age" |

² *Anonymi auctoris expositio officiorum Ecclesiae Georgio Arbelensis vulgo adscripta* I, R. H. Conolly (ed.), *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, Scriptorum Syri, Series secunda, tomus xci, Rome 1911-13, 154-55; cf. S. Pudichery, *Ramsa: An Analysis and Interpretation of the Chaldean Vespers*, Bangalore 1972, 200.

³ The supposition of Annunciation on a Sunday, might have been derived from the surveillance of important events that have already been taken place on other Sundays of this scheme. If those decisive divine interventions took place on Sundays (the Lord's days), his own first coming to the world (Annunciation) should not have been taken place on any other day than that of his own day, the Lord's Day (Sunday). Canon 2 of the *Doctrine of the apostles*, a 4th century Syriac document of pseudo apostolic teachings on the liturgical feasts and commemorations, says that on the first day of the week he manifested himself in the world; see W. Cureton (ed. & tr.), *Ancient Syriac Documents*, London 1864, 26 (tr. 26); A. Vööbus (ed. & tr.), *Synodicon in West Syrian Tradition*, CSCO 367, Scriptorum Syri 161-162, Louvain 1975, 201-202 (tr. 189); P. Kannookadan, *The East Syrian Lectionary*, Rome 1991, 157.

Synchronism

The matter and mind of scripture lessons for liturgical celebrations are set aside in the synchronism of different stages of salvation history. Here the dynamism is found in the chronological order of arrangement of distinct Christ events. Christ's departure from heaven to earth, ended with His final return to heaven. He came to the world to make us capable of accompanying Him to His eternal abode. This divine journey is made perennial through the liturgical year. In this regard the lectionary system is a great help to perpetuate the Bride's pilgrimage towards the Groom in the everlasting city, a New Jerusalem of true sanctuary and true tabernacle.⁵

The synchronism in lectionary helps the Bride to make Her journey much easier. The scripture lessons here for the whole year follow fully the salvific order of divine dispensation, the offering up of Christ's own self to us,⁶ as it is theologically expressed in the liturgy of the hours for nine liturgical seasons (Hudra) compiled by Iso-Yahb III in 7th century:⁷

⁴ If the hypothesis of his first coming to the world on a Sunday is correct (see *ibid.*), then follows a natural deduction of a Sunday for his second coming too, in order to pronounce his final decisive judgement upon the humanity. Moreover an internal agreement to this hypothesis is being indicated also by the third commandment of God to keep the Lord's day holy, and the first commandment of the Church to abstain from work on that particular day. These mandates are given in order to urge us to get ready on Sundays to face worthily his second coming. Jesus indirectly refers to this fact in Mt 24:40,41 "Then (on that day) two men will be working in the field; one will be taken, the other left; and two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, the other left". Those who keep vigil and alert on Sundays for his second coming will be taken, and those who are unwatchful and unprepared will be left. It is towards this alertness and preparedness on Sundays that we are called for to oblige the commandments of God and the Church. Canon 2 of the *Doctrine of the Apostles* (see *ibid.*), says that on the first day of the week he will appear in the end with the angels of heaven; See W.Cureton Ed.& tr.), *Ancient Syriac Document*, p. 26 (tr.26); A.Vööbus (ed.&tr.), *Synodicon*, p. 201-202 (tr. 189); P.Kannookadan, *The East Syrian Lectionary*, p. 157.

⁵ *Lumen Gentium* 50; *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 8; Col 3:1; Heb 8:2,10:11,13:14; Rev 21:2.

⁶ For detailed study on divine dispensation (*Mdabbranuta*) of salvation history in East Syrian liturgy, see J. Chittilapilly, *Mdabbranuta: The Divine Dispensation of our Lord in the Holy "Qurbana" of the East Syrian Tradition*, Kottayam 1999, 5-85.

⁷ See the preface to "Hudra" (cycle) by Rabban Brik-Iso (14th Century) *Cambridge Add.*1981 (1607 AD), ff.2v-4v; cf. W. Wright & S.A. Cook, *A Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, Vol.1, Cambridge 1901, 164-168. For a French translation of this manuscript see J. Mateos, *Lelya Sapra*, Rome 1972, 461-64, and for a Malayalam translation of this Syriac preface see C. Payngot, *Aradhana Valsaram* (Malayalam 2nd edition), Kottayam 2001, 38-42; The Syriac text of this manuscript preface is given in the liturgy of the hours of the Assyrian Church of the East published by Darmo, *Ktaba de Qdam wa-de-Batar wa-de-Hudra wa-de-Kaskull wa-de-Gazza* (Syriac), 3 Vols., Trichur 1960-61, 111-112 in all three volumes; For a theological significance of seasons in East Syrian tradition, see J. Moolan, *The Period of Annunciation- Nativity in the East Syrian Calendar*, Kottayam 1985, 53; Id., *Paurastya Suriyani Sabha Kalendar* (Malayalam), 3rd edition, Kottayam 1994, 14.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Annunciation-Nativity | = The mystery of Incarnation |
| 2. Denha | = The mystery of revelation |
| 3. Great Fast | = The mystery of suffering and death |
| 4. Resurrection | = The mystery of redemption |
| 5. Slecha | = The mystery of the working of the Holy Spirit |
| 6. Qaitha | = The mystery of the growth of the Church |
| 7. Elia-Sleebea | = The mystery of the power of the Cross |
| 8. Moses | = The mystery of the second coming |
| 9. The Dedication of the Church | = The mystery of our own final glory |

In the above-mentioned scheme of different cycles, the Sunday lessons are well regulated so as to agree themselves with the salvation mysteries celebrated in seasons of the whole year.

Diachronism

In the development of divine dispensation through different liturgical seasons, the systematic exchanges of Scripture lessons are found consistent with the Old and New Testament happenings. The Old Testament types from the Book of Law, and the New Testament realities from Gospel represent the diachronism applied in liturgical time and space in worship. Here the relation between the typical and realistic occurrences unfolds the gracefulness of the salvation economy. To these commemorative and anamnestic lessons from the Book of Law and Gospel, the invocational and epicletic lessons from Prophets and Apostles are added as guidelines for both the people of Old and New Israel. The prophetic admonitions to the people of Israel, and the apostolic exhortations to the Church are considered as the inspired words of God to the needs of people in time and place. Thus the structure of the lectionary is made up of a sequence of anamnestic (commemorative) and epicletic (invocation) Scripture lessons. The commemorative lessons from the Old Testament recall the typological happenings in the past, and the anamnestic lessons from the Gospel recall the real or historical fulfilment of those types in the life of Jesus. The types are the foreshadowing of Christ events, and the realities are the particular Christ experiences to be imitated in Christian life. Therefore the theology of lectionary system cannot be deduced from certain individual lessons detached from its entire structure of the individual units for each day.⁸

⁸ R. Taft, *Beyond East and West, Problems in Liturgical Understanding*, Washington 1984, 10; C. Giraudo, *La Struttura letteraria della preghiera eucaristica*, *Analecta Biblica* 92, Rome 1981, 271-366; P. Kannookadan, *The East Syrian Lectionary*, 170-71.

Seasonal Synthesis of Lectionary Theology

Lessons for Sundays and Lord's feast days alone are discussed here. Since Sundays are the pivotal point of the celebration of salvation economy, the lectionary for week-days follows fully the spirit of Sundays. In the East Syrian tradition, according to the spirit of the season, the Fridays are dedicated for saints; because in following Christ (Mt 16:24) they carried their own crosses joyfully as Christ carried his own cross and died on it on a Friday. Since Sundays are for Christ, Fridays are devoted for saints.

The structure of four lessons for each day is applied here in order to maintain the fullness of the synchronic and diachronic system of lectionary. If only two lessons are applied on days, they should be from the New Testament;⁹ otherwise it affects the whole scheme of lectionary. This will be clear from the following synthesis. The lectionary guide referred here is the one approved by the Oriental Congregation for the use of the Syro-Malabar Church for temporal (*Hudra*) and sanctoral (*Gaẓẓ*) cycles in the liturgical year.¹⁰

1. Annunciation-Nativity

In order to get four Sundays before December 25 (Christmas), the season should begin on a Sunday from Nov. 27 to Dec.3. If Christmas falls on Monday or Tuesday, then there will be only one Sunday between Christmas (Dec.25) and *Denha* Feast (Jan.6), otherwise there will be two Sundays after Christmas.

The commemorative lessons from the Book of Law express the theology of God's fidelity in his promise to Abraham; and the anamnetic lessons from Gospel establish the fulfilment of God's promise in Jesus. The Old Testament types of Jesus are historically realised at the Nativity of Jesus. The invocation lessons from prophets and the epicletic lessons from epistles manifest the theology of witnessing God to the world. The prophetic admonitions to Israel request them to follow the good examples of their leaders; while the apostolic exhortations to Christians demand them to follow Jesus the true leader.

⁹ See *Ordo Celebrationis*, p.59-62, and its Malayalam translation *Kudasayude Aghoshakramam Syro Malabar Sabhayude Upayogathinu* (Malayalam), Mar Thoma Vidyanikethan, Chengannassery 1998, 61-64.

¹⁰ *Ordo Celebrationis*, p.43-58 (*Hudra* = temporal cycle: Four lessons for Sundays, movable feast days and other days of Eucharistic celebration), 59-62 (Non assigned days: Two New Testament lessons for week days that are not found in the temporal cycle), 63-70 (*Gaza* = sanctoral cycle: Four lessons for fixed feast days). Therefore this calendar gives four lessons (two from OT and two from NT) for each day in temporal and sanctoral cycles; while only two lessons (one from the Epistles and the other from Gospel) for each non assigned day in temporal cycle. For a Malayalam translation of this lectionary guide, see *Kudasayude Aghoshakramam*, 46-60 (lessons for temporal cycle), 61-64 (lessons for non assigned days), 64-71 (lessons for sanctoral cycle). For a comparative theological analysis of this lectionary with that of cathedral and monastic lectionaries, see P. Kannookadan, *The East Syrian Lectionary*, 171-210.

Sundays		Epicletic Lessons	
Type	Real	Prophetic warning to Israel	Apostolic exhortation to the Church
1. Gen 17:1-27 God's covenant with Israel	Lk 1:1-25 Annunciation to Zachary	Is 42:18-43:13 Israel's witness to Yahweh	Eph 5:21-6:9 Christians' witness to Jesus
2. Num 22:20-23:2 Balaam's prophecy	Lk 1:26-56 Annunciation to Mary, Visitation	Is 43:14-44:5 Promise of forgiveness	Col 4:2-18 Justification by trust in God
3. Gen 18:1-19 Announcement of Birth of Isaac	Lk 1:57-80 Birth of John the Baptist	Judg 13:2-24 Samson to deliver Israel	Eph 3:1-21 Paul to communicate the revealed mysteries of God
4. Gen 24:50-67 Isaac's marriage with Rebecca	Mt 1:18-25 Joseph's acceptance of Mary	1 Sam 1:1-18 Prayer of Hannah for a child	Eph 5:5-21 God's Kingdom for children of light
Nativity			
Is 7:10-16,9:1-13 Prophecy About <i>Emanuel</i>	Lk 2:1-20 Birth of Jesus, the Saviour	Mic 4:1-3,5:2-5,8-9 God's reign in Sion	Gal 3:15-4:6 Establishment of law and faith
1. Gen 21:1-21 Birth of Isaac, Expulsion of Hagar & Ismael	Mt 2:1-23 Magi, Massacre, flight to Egypt	1 Sam 1:19-28 Birth of Samuel to Hannah	Gal 4:18-5:1 Christians are the children of promise
2. Ex 2:1-10 Infant Moses in royal palace	Lk 2:21-52 Presentation of Jesus in the temple	Is 49:1-6 Commissioning of prophet the servant of God	2 Tim 2:16-26 Duties of Lord's servant

2. *Denba*

Eight Sundays are listed in this season; but the number of Sundays varies according to the change in the date of Easter in each year. Since *Denba* is a fixed feast on Jan.6, if it falls on a Sunday, that Sunday is counted as the feast day, and the following Sunday will be the first Sunday of *Denba*. The commemorative lessons from the Book of Law and the anamnetic lessons from Gospel express the theology of God's manifestation to the world. The Old Testament types of this revelation to the people of Israel are historically realised in the true manifestation of Jesus to the world. The invocation lessons from prophets and the epicletic lessons from the epistles explicate the theology of spiritual rebirth. The prophetic admonitions to Israel request them to show fidelity to Yahweh for attaining rebirth from slavery to freedom, poverty to prosperity and exile to restoration. While the apostolic exhortations to Christians demand fidelity to Jesus for attaining rebirth from sin to sanctity, damnation to salvation, and death to life.

Sundays		Epicletic Lessons	
Type	Real	Prophetic warning to Israel	Apostolic exhortation to the
Epiphany Feast			
Num 24:2-9,15-25 Balaam's Blessings to Israel, and Prophecy about Messiah	Mt 3:1-17 Baptism of Jesus and revelation of Trinity	Is 4:2-5,11:1-5,12:4-6 Messiah will revive Israel	Tit 2:11-3:7 Regeneration and renewal in the Spirit
1. Ex 3:1-15 Vocation of Moses	Lk 4:14-30 Beginning of Jesus' ministry	Is 44:21-45:4 Israel is called for showing God's glory	2 Tim 3:1-15 Times of difficulties for followers of Christ
2. Num 10:29-11:10 Holy march of Israel with the Ark	Jn 1:1-28 Holy appearance of Jesus the eternal Word	Is 45:11-17 Woe to trouble makers against the Creator	Heb 3:1-4:7 Danger of unbelief
3. Num 11:11-20 Moses' encounter with God	Jn 1:29-42 John the Baptist's witness to Jesus	Is 45:18-46:4 Jahweh is the only source of prosperity	Heb 3:14-4:10 The benefit of belief
4. Num 11:23-35 Yahweh's saving acts for Israel	Jn 1:43-2:11 Miracle at Cana	Is 46:5-13 Rebuke against idol worship	Heb 7:18-28 Eternal intercession of Jesus
5. Deut 18:9-22 Avoidance of heathen practices for attaining Promised Land	Jn 3:1-21 Rebirth to inherit God's Kingdom of eternal life	Is 48:12-20 Listen the Lord to attain peace and hope	Heb 6:9-7:3 Exhortation to maintain hope
6. Deut 24:9-22 Civic and cultic laws for good conduct	Jn 3:22-4:3 John's witness to Jesus	Is 63:7-16 Request to remember Yahweh's redemptive acts	Heb 8:1-9:10 Jesus, our heavenly High Priest and Intercessor
7. Deut 14:2-15:4 Laws on purity and offerings	Mt 7:28-8:13 Cleansing of leper, and the cure of centurion's servant	Is 42:5-9,14-17 Be a light to guide the nations	1Tim 6:9-21 Guidance for an upright life
8. Ex 15:22-26 Healing of the bitterness of water at Marah	Mk 1:1-11 John's ministry and Jesus' baptism	Is 44:23-45:3 Pay attention to God the Creator and Redeemer	Eph 1:15-2:7 Prayer for the Ephesian Church

3. Great Fast

This period should have seven weeks. The commemorative lessons from the Book of Law and the anamnetic lessons from Gospels express liberation theology. The Old Testament types like Noah, Abraham, Melchizedek, Joseph and Moses are the liberators of Israel; while the Gospel lessons historically realise Jesus as the true liberator and saviour. The invocation lessons from prophets and the epicletic lessons from epistles bring forth the theology of a new life in God. Prophetic admonitions to Israel propose criterion of good conduct for a successful entry to the Promised Land; while the apostolic exhortations to Christians demand a proper control of life for entering the Kingdom of God.

Sundays Anamnetic Lessons		Epicletic Lessons	
Type	Real	Prophetic warning to Israel	Apostolic exhortation to the Church
1. Ex 43:1-7,27-35 Giving of tablets of Ten Commandments, and Moses' fasting for 40 days	Mt 3:16-4:11 Jesus' fasting for forty days, and temptation in wilderness	Is 58:1-12,14 Teaching on true and false fasting	Eph 4:17-5:4,15-21 Teachings on moral standards
2. Gen 5:19-35 Genealogy of Noah	Mt 7:15-27 False prophets and two builders	Josh 4:15-24 Monument of Jordan crossing miracle	Rom 6:1-23 The new life in Christ
3. Gen 7:1-24 Noah's refuge in the ark	Mt 20:17-28 Passion prediction, and Zebedee sons	Josh 5:13-6:5 Joshua encounters God's angel, and the capture of Jericho	Rom 7:14:25 Struggle against sin
4. Gen 11:1-32 Tower of Babel, and genealogy of Abraham	Mt 21:23-46 Jesus' last week in Jerusalem	Josh 6:27-7:15 Joshua's grief over Achan's sin of looting	Rom 8:12-27 Avoidance of sin for attaining glory
5. Gen 16:1-16 Birth of Ishmael	Jn 7:37-58,8:12-20 Jesus, the living water and light of the world	Josh 9:15-27 Punishment for Gibeonites for telling lie	Rom 12:1-21 Demand to lead a Christian life
6. Gen 19:1-7,9-26 Rescue of Loth from Sodom	Jn 9:39-10:21 Jesus, the good shepherd	Josh 21:43-22:9 Blessings to Israel	Rom 14:10-23 Clarification of right and wrong
7. Hosana Sunday Gen 49:1-12,22-26 Jacob's last Word of prophecy to his sons	Mt 20:29-21:22 Triumphal entry in Jerusalem, and cleansing the temple	Zech 4:8-14,7:9-10,8:4-5,12-19, 9:9-12 Zachary's vision about the restoration of God's people	Rome 11:13-24 Restoration of Jews
Paschal Thursday Ex 12:1-20 Institution of Passover	Mt 26:1-5,14-30 Institution of Eucharist	Zech 9:9-12,11:12-13,12:9-14, 13:7-9 Prophecy on Messiah	1Cor 5:7-8,8:15-17,11:23-35 About the celebration of the Eucharist
Good Friday <i>Ramsa</i> Is 52:15-53:12 Israel's deliverance by a suffering servant	Lk 22:63-23:12;Mt 27:19; Lk 23: 13-23;Mt 27:24-25; Lk 23:24-45;Mt 27:51-54 Jn 19:23-42 Jesus' trial, suffering, death and burial	Dan 9: 20-27 Daniel' vision of the restoration of the the anointed one	Gal 2:17-3:14 Be crucified with Christ to live with Christ, and faith alone saves
<i>Leliya</i>	Mt 26:31-44;Lk 22:43-44; Mt 26:45-50;Lk 22:49-50; Jn 18:10;Mt 26:52;Jn 18:11; Mt 26:52-75 composite lessons about Jesus' passion narration up to the denial of Jesus		
Holy Saturday <i>Ramsa</i> Gen 22:1-19 Abraham's offering up of Isaac	Mt 27:62-66 sealing and guarding of the tomb	Jonah 2:1-10 Jonah's repentance and deliverance	1Cor 1:18-31 The wisdom of God versus the wisdom of the world
<i>Eucharist</i>	Mt 28:1-20 The empty tomb, and the angel's message		1 Cor 15:20-28 Christ's resurrection a guarantee for our resurrection

4. Resurrection

This period should have seven weeks. Except for the Sunday of Resurrection and the Ascension Day, the commemorative lessons are not from the book of Law, but from the book of Isaiah, the prophetic foretelling about Jesus' resurrection. And the invocation lessons from prophets have been replaced by the lessons from the Acts of the Apostles, the apostolic Easter experience of the risen Lord. Thus in this season out of four lessons, three of them are taken from the New Testament.

The commemorative lessons from Isaiah and the anamnetic lessons from Gospel express the theology of future everlasting life. The prophet Isaiah makes here intelligible the resurrection as the centre of salvation history, so as the Old Testament converges towards it, and the New Testament proceeds from it. Mount Zion (Jerusalem), the centre of God's presence, and Jerusalem Temple, the centre of God's delight among Israel, are brought forward here as the types of resurrection glory. The anamnetic Gospel lessons historically realise resurrection as a guarantee for our own resurrection to the age to come. The invocation lessons from Acts of the Apostles and the epicletic lessons from epistles bring out the theology of Easter joy as the real Christian joy. The apostolic experience of tremendous joy, in preaching and suffering for the sake of the risen Lord, is a great mystery that expresses the mystical theology of joy in suffering. It is the life in Christ that brings an everlasting joy. Martyrdom of Stephen and the conversion of Paul are the examples of this search for an everlasting happiness. Therefore the apostles exhort the Christians to lead a life in worthy of the Lord to make one and others happy.

Sundays		Anamnetic Lessons		Epicletic Lessons	
Type		Real		Prophetic warning to Israel	Apostolic exhortation to the Church
1. Sunday of Resurrection Vigil		Lk 24:1-12 The resurrection Morning			
Eucharist Is 60:1-7 The streaming Glorious light of the Lord		Jn 20:1-18 Empty tomb and appearance to Magdalene		1 Sam 2:1-10 Hannah's prayer of praise	Rom 5:20-6:23 The new life in Christ
2. Is 55:4-13 Zion, the spring of life		Jn 20:19-31 Jesus' appearance to the ten, and to Thomas		Acts 4:32-5:11 Ananias and Sapphires (discipline in the Church)	Col 1:1-20 Thanksgiving to Christ, the crown of creation
3. Is 56:1-7 Salvation for all		Jn 14:1-14 Jesus the way, truth and life		Acts 5:34-42 Apostles' joy in suffering for Christ	Eph 1:1-14 In Christ we have redemption and forgiveness sin
4. Is 49:13-23 Deliverance of Israel		Jn 16:16-33 "Little while" of Jesus' departure and return		Acts 8:14-25 The winning of Simon the sorcerer	Eph 1:15-2:7 Christ, the highest One, provides salvation
5. Is 49:7-13 Messiah's commission to deliver Israel fishing		Jn 21:1-14 Jesus' appearance at Tiberias, and the miraculous		Acts 9:1-19 The conversion of Paul	Heb 10:19-36 The danger of rejecting Christ

6. Is 51:9-11, 52:7-12 Awake and rejoice Jerusalem in God's deliverance	Jn 17:1-26 Jesus' prayer for disciples	Acts 10:1-16 Cornelius' vision, and Peter's trance	Eph 2:4-22 All are one in Christ by the grace of the Lord
Ascension Thursday			
2 King 2:1-15 Elijah's taking up into heaven	Lk 24:36-53 Ascension of Christ	Acts 1:1-14 Apostles' witness of Ascension	1 Tim 1:18-2:15 The necessity of intercessory prayer
7. Is 6:1-13 Isaiah's vision on God's glory in the temple	Mk 16:9-20 The post resurrection appearances of Jesus	Acts 1:15-26 The selection of Mathias	Phil 1:27-2:11 Jesus our model of Christian life

5. *Sleeha* (Apostle)

This period should have seven weeks. The commemorative lessons from the book of Law and the anamnestic lessons from Gospel bring out the theology of Messianic Community. The Old Testament type of this community is the people of Israel. The community of Israel was united by the covenant of God. The Sinai theophany revealed the laws (commandments) of this community. Their juridical organisations and traditions prove their belonging to the Lord. Their communal strength contained in the faith and courage acquired from the Lord. While the historical recallings from Gospel contain the particular Christ events for forming the Christian community. The members of this community, the disciples are named as the messengers of Christ. Their mission is universal, because they are called not for Jews alone, but for gentiles too. Miracles and signs strengthened their faith in Jesus. The Counsellor (H. Spirit) given by Jesus is still guiding the present Christian Community. Jesus has promised his continuous presence to this community (the Church), the mystical body of Christ, and has guaranteed his constant protection in all her ways until the end of the world (Mt 20:28).

The invocation lessons from prophets and the epicletic lessons from epistles theologise the activities of Spirit guided community. Prophetic admonitions to Israel give proper guidance for them to do things in right way. Turning to Zion (Jerusalem) by righteousness, they have to flee away from corruption and vices in order to keep up their fidelity to the Lord. The apostolic exhortations to the Church elucidate the sublime character of Christian community. The Pentecost inaugurated the Christian community. Apostles the first members of this community, started teaching the Christian disciplines and the eternal Gospel truths. Repent and be baptised became the pivotal point of their teachings on the risen Lord, because it is the requisite for becoming the children of God to inherit God's kingdom. Love is the exalted character of this community. The faith in Jesus and the steadfastness in truth are the means of Christian response. Then only the Christian community will be formed into the mystical body of Christ, the Church. Perfect members alone can form a perfect body.

Sundays		Epicletic Lessons	
Type	Real	Prophetic warning to Israel	Apostolic exhortation to the Church
1. Pentecost			
Ex 19:1-9; 20:18-21 covenant Promise of Yahweh	Jn 14:15-16,25-26; 15:26-16:15 Jesus' promise of Counsellor	Acts 2:1-21 Pentecostal inauguration of Messianic Community	1 Cor 12:1-27 Diversity and unity of Gifts, the analogy of human body to the Church
2. Joel 2:15-26 Call to repentance, God's abundant blessings	Lk 7:31-50 Anointing of Jesus' feet, and forgiveness to Magdalene	Acts 4:5-22 Peter and John before the Sanhedrin	1 Cor 5:6-6:11 The conduct of Christian Community
3. Deut 1:3-17 Juridical organisation of Israel	Lk 10:23-42 Good Samaritan, Martha and Mary	Is 1:1-9 Judgement of God	1 Cor 7:1-7 Marriage duties
4. Deut 1:16-33 Selection of twelve tribal leaders, and God's providence	Lk 6:12-46 Selection of twelve Apostles, beatitudes, and the law of love	Is 1:10-20 God demands holiness, not sacrifice	1 Cor 9:13-27 The rights and duties of an apostle
5. Deut 1:33-2:1 Fidelity of Israel to the Lord	Lk 12:16-34 Hoarding possessions, trust in providence	Is 1:21-31 Lament over the infidelity of Israel	1 Cor 14:1-9 The gift of tongue and prophecy
6. Deut 4:1-10 Demand to keep God's Law	Lk 12:57-13:1 Demand for repentance	Is 2:1-19 Final restoration of Jerusalem	1 Cor 10:14-32 Solutions for pagan practices
7. Deut 4:10-24 Warning against idolatry	Lk 13:22-35 The importance of repentance	Is 5:8-25 Curse against seven sins of Judah	1 Cor 15:58-16:24 Instructions on charity

6. *Qaitha*

The date of Sept.14, the feast of the exaltation of the Cross, determines the weeks in this season. In order to begin the season *Elia* before the feast, and the season *Sleebe* (Cross) after the feast, the weeks in *Qaitha* shall be less than seven in those years of late occurrence of Easter date.

The commemorative lessons from the Book of Law and the anamnetic lessons from Gospel show the theology of the growth of the Old and New Israel. The real growth contains in the inward renewal. The OT types from the Book of Law manifest the criterion of spiritual growth among the Israelites. Obedience to the commandments, choosing of right path, keeping of Sabbath worship, doing justice and charity are the mandates for their growth. Whenever they broke the laws and went astray, they were leading themselves to damnation. Therefore a reorientation of mind and heart towards Yahweh helped them to make a thorough renewal of attaining spiritual growth. The historical real recallings from Gospel manifest Jesus' concern for the new community in its growth towards God's

Kingdom. The manifesto for this growth contains the practice of humility, sharing, repentance, love and concern for others. To be a fruitful Christian means to follow fully Jesus everywhere.

The invocation lessons from prophets and the epicletic lessons from epistles express the theology of God’s counsel for bearing fruits pleasing to the Lord. Prophetic admonitions manifest the necessity of openness to God for the spiritual uplift. Woe to those who escape from God’s counsel, because hiding from God causes obstacles to growth by bringing God’s wrath upon them. Blessing for overcoming the obstacles shall be with those who work for the Lord. The apostolic exhortations to the Christian community explain the methodology of attaining God’s counsel. This methodology contains obedience to Gospel, use of diverse gifts, courage to proclaim truth, good conduct of life, search for the will of God, fulfilment of Christian duties, avoidance of scandals and doing charity. The perfect members alone can constitute a perfect body of the Church. Therefore the striving for perfection is the real Christian growth that enables to taste the real presence of the mystical body of Christ on earth. Thus the growth in faith, love and sanctity is the true growth. The quantitative growth is less important without a qualitative growth.

Sundays		Anamnetic Lessons		Epicletic Lessons	
Type		Real		Prophetic warning to Israel	Apostolic exhortation to the Church
1. King 18:30-39 Sacrifice on Carmel by Elijah		Lk 14:1-14 Healing on Sabbath instructions for guests and Hosts		Acts 5:12-35 The first persecution the great growth of the Church	1 Cor 1:9-16; 2 Cor 1:8-14 Appeal for unity, not division
2. Deut 4:32-40 The splendour of Israel as God’s chosen nation		Lk 15:4-32 Three parables of God’s mercy		Is 3:16-4:6 Warning to the daughters of Zion	2 Cor 3:4-18 The glorious nature of ministry
3. Deut 5:1-16 First five of ten commandments		Jn 9:1-38 Healing of the blind man		Is 5:1-7 Israel the vineyard of wild and sour grapes	2 Cor 7:1-11 Paul’s joy in the repentance of his congregation
4. Deut 5:16-6:3 Second five of		Mt 7:1-22 Rebukes the pharisaic ten Commandments		Is 9:8-21 Evil consequences of sin	2 Cor 10:1-18 call to obey the Gospel hypocrisy on blind traditions
5. Lev 23:33-43 Instructions on the feat of tabernacles		Lk 16:19-17:10 Teachings on sharing, forgiveness and faith		Is 28:14-22 Warning against evil counsellors	2 Cor 12:14-21 Paul’s anxiety over improper behaviour
6. Lev 19:1-4, 9-14 Laws on right conduct		Lk 17:5-19 Teaching on the inner renewal		Is 29:13-24 Woe to those hiding from God’s counsel	1 Thes 2:1-12 Paul’s example of pleasing God rather than men
7. Lev 19:15-19; 20:9-14 Laws on good behaviour		Lk 18:1-14 Illustrations on constant and humble prayer		Is 33:1-15 Honesty and integrity as the criterion for God’s presence	1 Thes 2:14-3:13 Paul’s concern and prayer for the Church

7. Elia-Sleebea (Cross)

This period never gets seven weeks for itself. In order to complete the seven weeks’ system, the counting is extended to the seasons that follow immediately. Since the litur-

gical seasons of *Elia-Sleebe*, Moses and Dedication of the Church deal with the Eschatological realities, the overlap counting of weeks to these seasons makes no problem to the synchronic and diachronic approach of the lectionary system.

The Sept.14, the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, is the deciding factor in calculating the seasons' weeks of *Elia-Sleebe*, Moses and Dedication of the Church. Before Sept.14 *Elia* season alone should not be given more than three weeks, but it should be given minimum one week in order to avoid the omission of *Elia* in the years of very late happening of Easter date. Then in those years the other remaining two weeks of *Elia* before Sept.14 will be suppressed, and the Sunday after Sept.14 shall follow an integrated counting as 1st of *Sleebe* - 4th of *Elia*, because the Sunday after Sept.14 should be the first Sunday of *Sleebe*.¹¹ Thus the counting maintains the seven-week system as follows:

Elia 1

" 2

" 3

Sept.14 the Exaltation or the Finding of the Cross

" 4, *Sleebe* 1

" 5, " 2

" 6, " 3

" 7, " 4

" 5, Moses 1

" 6, " 2

" 7, " 3

" 4, Dedication of the Church 1

" 5, " 2

" 6, " 3

" 7, " 4

The commemorative lessons from the Book of Law and the anamnetic lessons from Gospel analyse the theology of trust in the Kingdom of God. Here the typology from the Old Testament sets forth the necessity of making complete trust in the promise of Yahweh. The quest for a full realisation of Exodus, and its yearly recalling to Israel children on Passover Day, express their full confidence in the Promised Land. The special election of Israel and God's merciful favours upon them, demand an upright life in accordance to the commandments of God as a requisite for establishing God's Kingdom

¹¹ See the rubrics in P. Bedjan, *Breviarium juxta Ritum Syrorum Orientalium id est Chaldaeorum*, Vol. 3, Rome 1939, 256.

among them. The historical recalling from Gospel indicates the realisation of God’s Kingdom on earth by Jesus. Christ’s own presence among us is a genuine foretasting of this eschatological reality in future. Jesus manifested this truth through his parables of sower, darnel, mustard seed and leaven. All without any distinction are welcomed to his Kingdom. The Canaanite woman, Sachaeus, the epileptic boy and the blind beggar at Jericho are a few examples of them.

The invocation lessons from prophets and the epicletic lessons from epistles discuss the theology of redemption. Prophetic admonitions to Israel express their blessedness in future Jerusalem. Jahweh’s marvellous defence shall lead them to this glory. He gave just kings to rule them, and commandments to keep the order in the community. He showed his great predilection towards them by granting mercy and protection in their needs. Therefore the Israel had a great responsibility of following the path of the Lord by remaining faithful to his promises. The apostolic exhortations on the other hand explicate the theology of the Church as the redeemed community. The redeemed fellowship means, the predilection of Jesus towards his elected, faithful and spiritually gifted community. Therefore the Church, the mystical body and bride of Christ, has a great responsibility of remaining faithful to Christ, the Head and Groom. For this purpose the apostle Paul instructs the Christians on the importance of practical life and pastoral duties for maintaining the real presence of God’s Kingdom on earth.

Sundays		Anamnetic Lessons		Epicletic Lessons			
Type		Real		Prophetic warning to Israel		Apostolic exhortation to the Church	
1. Elia Deut 6:20-7:6 Recalling of the the salvation history to the children of Israel		Lk 18:35-19:10 Salvation to out casts (blind beggar and Zachaeus		Is 31:1-9 Protection to Jerusalem		2 Thes 1:1-10 Thanks, encouragement and prayer	
2. Elia Deut 7:7-11 God's election of Israel		Mt 13:1-23 The sower, the parable of the kingdom		Is 30:15-26 God's patience and mercy for Israel		2 Thes 2:15-3:18 Instruction on Christian duties and prayers	
3. Elia Deut 7:12-26 God's favour for Israel		Mt 13:24-43 Parables of the kingdom: the darnel, the mustard seed and the leaven		Is 32:1-33:6 Just king and Justice to have an order in society		Phil 1:12-25 Instruction to live for Christ	
Sept.14: The Exaltation or the Finding of the Cross							
1.Sleebea (Cross), 4. Elia Deut 8:11-20 Moses' warning against pride		Mt 4:12-5:16 Galiean ministry and the Beatitudes, the principles of the kingdom		Is 33:13-24 Vision of glorious future Jerusalem		Phil 1:27-2:11 Instruction for worthy Christian life	

2. <i>Sleebe</i> (Cross), 5. <i>Elia</i> Deut 9:1-8 God's promise of Canaan Land	Mt 17:14-26 Cure of the epileptic, passion prediction and the Temple tax	Is 25:1-8 Hymn of praise for God's wonderful deeds	Phil 3:1-14 Instruction of true way of salvation
3. <i>Sleebe</i> (Cross), 6. <i>Elia</i> Deut 9:13-22 Israel's idolatry of the golden calf	Mt 15:21-38 The Canaanite woman's faith, healing of the multitude and feeding the 4000	Is 26:1-19 The song of victory	Phil 4:4-23 Instruction for good conduct, and thanks for help
4. <i>Sleebe</i> (Cross), 7. <i>Elia</i> Deut 10:12-22 Request to obey The commandments	Mt 18:1-18 Teaching on humility and forgiveness	Is 33:1-14 Request for God's help	1 Cor 14:1,3,12,20,21,26,31-33 The pre-eminence of the gift of prophecy

8. Moses

This period gets seven weeks, only when it is integrated in counting with the followings seasons of *Sleebe* (Cross) and the Dedication of the Church. Since the period of the Dedication of the Church should be given four weeks before the beginning of the period of Annunciation on a Sunday from Nov.27 through Dec.3, the weeks are to be adjusted in the period of Moses. Therefore, even though there can actually never be more than three or four weeks (Sundays) in the period of Moses,¹² it retains the traditional seven week structure so as not to violate the system of seven weeks' principle of the calendar. Before the reformation of the calendar by Iso-Yahb III in the 7th century, the period of Moses had seven weeks for itself. He detached the last four weeks of Moses, and formed a separate season of the Dedication of the Church.¹³

The commemorative lessons from the Book of Law and the anamnetic lessons from Gospel express the eschatology of future life. The typology of future blissful life with God is manifested in the lessons from the book of Deuteronomy. The faithful fulfilment of covenant is the criterion for the everlasting God experience. Therefore the acceptance of God's covenant results in blessing, and its infringement results in cursing. Idolatry is a deadly serious error against God's covenant. God is faithful in his promises as long as we too are faithful to him. The historical recalling from Gospel, promise salvation for those who response positively to God's Kingdom. Jesus' promise about this reality is brought out through the parable of the labourers. His readiness to give salvation for those who are faithful is expressed through the healing of the woman with haemorrhage and the raising of the daughter of Jairus. The theology of liberation from our life problems is explicated through Jesus' acts of calming the storm, curing the demoniac and healing

¹² Rabban Brikiso, *Cambridge Add.* 1981 (4th century Syriac manuscript), f. 4v; cf. W. Wright & S.A. Cook, *A Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts*, p. 167; J. Mateos, *Lelya-Sapra*, p. 463; C. Payngot, *Aradhana Valsaram* (Malayalam 2nd edition), p. 41.

¹³ *Anonymi auctoris expositio officiorum Georgio Arbelensis vulgo adscripta* I, ed. R.H. Connolly, *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium*, scriptores Syri, series secunda, tomus xci, Rome 1911-1913, 21-22; J. Mateos, *Lelya-Sapra*, p. 286.

the paralytic. The basic theme of salvation is contained in the great commandment of the love of God and neighbour.

The invocation lessons from the prophet Isaiah and the anamnestic lessons from epistles decree the salvation for the just ones. The prophetic admonitions demand to do justice in order to receive justice. The splendid Majesty will protect the just ones even when they are unjustly oppressed and crushed by the evil ones. The promise of sending forth a suffering servant to save Israel provides a great hope in the future salvation economy of Jesus. The apostolic exhortations through epistles demand the Christians to be faithful to their duties for getting divine protection. The sincerity in life is the measuring rod of salvation. Therefore the instructions on spiritual discipline and pastoral duties to be kept up in the Church are very important here.

Sundays		Epicletic Lessons	
Type	Real	Prophetic warning to Israel	Apostolic exhortation to the Church
1. Moses, 5. Sleebea (Cross) Deut 11:1-12 Moses' admonitions on the love of God and commandments to enter the promised land	Mt 20:1-16 Parable of the vineyard labourers	Is 40:1-17 God's assurance of future deliverance from exile	2 Cor 1:23-2:16 Paul's sincerity towards the Church of Corinth
2. Moses, 6. Sleebea (Cross) Deut 11:13-12:1 Moses' admonitions on obedience as blessing, and on disobedience as curse	Lk 8:41-56 Healing of the bleeding woman	Is 40:18-41:7 God's assurance of his sovereignty and faithfulness	Gal 5:1-26 Exhortation on freedom and the discipline of the Holy Spirit
3. Moses, 7. Sleebea (Cross) Deut 13:12-18 Moses' admonitions on enticement of idolatry	Mt 8:23-9:9 The calming of the storm, the healing of demoniac and the cure of paralytic	Is 41:8-20 God's assurance of victory, blessings and prosperity to Israel	Gal 6:1-18 Practical instructions on mutual help and boasting about the Cross of Jesus
4. Moses Deut 12:29-14:2 Moses' admonitions on false prophets and idolaters	Mt 22:22-37 The resurrection of the dead, and the greatest commandment	Is 41:21-42:4 God's assurance of justice through the suffering servant	1 Tim 5:1-16 Pastoral duties towards widows and elders

8. Dedication of the Church

This period comprises of the last four weeks of the East Syrian Calendar. In order to get four weeks, the period should start before four Sundays of the beginning of Annunciation season. It was Iso-Yahb III, the patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon (64-657), who separated four Sundays of Moses which formerly had seven Sundays, and instituted four Sundays of Dedication of the Church in imitation of four dedications of the tabernacles in the Old Testament. They are 1.The tabernacle dedicated by Moses (Ex 40:17-38), 2.The

tabernacle dedicated at Shiloh by the people of Israel (Josh 18:1f), 3.The dedication of the temple of Solomon (1 King 8:22-16; 2 Chro 6:12-7:10), 4.The dedication of the tabernacle by Joshua and Zerubabel (Ezr 3:1-13).¹⁴

The commemorative lessons from the book of Law and the anamnetic lessons from Gospel speak about the theology of the earthly abode of true living God. The foretasting of heavenly abode here on earth is manifested through God's presence in the tabernacles erected by human hands. The instructions on the construction of God's temple, and the appearance of theophanic clouds at the time of its dedication show the willingness of God to be with the people. Thus the people could experience his glory here on earth. In the historical recalling through Gospel lessons, the theophany reaches its climax as Jesus is the true God, the true temple, the true master and the Lord. By cleansing the temple and doing healing on Sabbath, Jesus proved his authority over everything. Thus Jesus' life on earth manifested the real presence of heaven on earth.

The invocation lessons from prophets and the epicletic lessons from apostles bring forth the eschatological realisation of great hope in future life. This hope is nothing but the eschatological realisation of the Church in heaven. The visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel reveal this fact by making God's glory to fill in the temple. The promise of rebuilding of the city of Sion is a sign for the existence of an eternal city of God. The apostolic exhortations stress the fact that Jesus is our final resort of eternal life. The new covenant and the new sacrifice signed with his blood are the proofs for this eternal truth. Jesus who is seated at the right hand side of the Father, will give the Church, his Bride, the inheritance of heaven at his own right hand side by allowing her to partake his glory. This eschatological realisation of the redeemed Church in future life with Christ consists in singing eternal holy hymn to the Holy Trinity in heaven.

Sundays		Anamnetic Lessons		Epicletic Lessons	
Type		Real		Prophetic warning to Israel	Apostolic exhortation to the Church
1. Ex40:17-34 Moses' dedication of the tabernacle		Mt 16:13-19 Peter's confession of faith (Christ the son of living God		Is 6:1-13 Vision of God in the temple	1 Cor 12:28-13:13 The importance of gift of love
2. Ex 39:32-40:16 Dedication of the tabernacle by the Israelites		Mt 12:1-21 Plucking wheat on Sabbath, and healing on Sabbath		1 King 8:10-29 Solomon's dedication of the temple	Heb 8:1-9:10 The importance of the old and new sacrifices
3. Num 7:1-10;9:15,18 Dedication of the altar by Moses, and the offerings		Jn 2:12-25 Cleansing of the temple		Is 54:1-15 Promise of creation of new Jerusalem	Heb 9:5-15 The difference between the old and new sacrifices
4. 1 King 6:1-9 Solomon's building of the temple		Mt 22:42-23:22 Christ, the only Lord and Master, and the sins of Scribes and Pharisees		Ez 43: 1-7; 44:1-5 The vision of Ezekiel	Heb 9:16-28 Christ's perfect sacrifice brings <i>Parousia</i> to us

Conclusion

The above-mentioned units of lectionary system in the East Syrian Church, manifest the two important stages of human life. They are the present temporal life on earth, and the future eternal life in world to come. The whole salvation history is oriented towards the attainment of eternal life in heaven. The revelation of this future bliss is the purpose of the various units of lectionary with regard to the commemorative lessons of typological foreshadowing from the Book of Law and the anamnetic lessons of historical recalling of Christ events from Gospel. Here the intention is to reveal that the future eschatological realities are not as something exclusively set apart to be enjoyed in the life to come, but they have their relevance even today in our daily life by enjoying heavenly experiences in our day today activities on earth. The transformation of our mortal life to an immortal life (1 Cor 15:53-54) is the purpose of the various units of lectionary system of the invocation lessons of prophetic admonitions and the epicletic lessons of apostolic exhortations. Here the intention is to set forth a process of transformation towards a higher level of life, i.e. from human to divine level. This transformation process conducted by prophets through God's message of revelation, helped the Israelites to transfigure themselves towards a people and a nation of God. While the apostolic transformation process through the redemptive acts of Christ, help the Christians to transfigure themselves to the Church (the New Israel), the mystical body of Christ. Therefore the Christian call is a divine call to become another Christ. This touches the very existence of Christian life, because here the each Christian has to be transfigured into the very essence of Christ. Thus Christian existence becomes a life in and through and for Christ, so that he shall be finally with Christ in His heavenly Jerusalem (Phil 1:21; Col 3:1; Heb 8:2,10:11,13:14; Rev 21:2).

At present the East Syrian tradition has only one-year lectionary system. By adapting the cathedral and monastic lectionary systems in early centuries, we could be able to give shape for another two lectionary systems. The formation of a new lectionary system by keeping up the lectionary theology of our tradition, is considerably important in giving shape for a fourth lectionary in our Church. The present lectionary in use today has got long lessons on Sundays. By reserving the central themes for Sundays, and distributing complementary themes for weekdays, we could be able to reduce the longitude of lessons. So far the Syro-Malabar Church has not printed out the lectionary to be used in worship. Therefore the composite lessons are missed out in today's usage of scriptural lessons in liturgy.

¹⁴ Ibid., *Anonymi auctoris expositio officiorum*, p.25.

THE GENUINE LITURGY IN INDIA: INDIAN, CHALDEAN, OR INDO- CHALDEAN?

Fr. Robert Mathews

Introduction

The Syro Malabar Church goes at present through an identity crisis: its liturgy is a mingling of Chaldean, Latin, and Indian elements. Nobody is satisfied with its present condition, mainly because a number of these elements were artificially imposed, instead of being the fruits of a natural growth. Often these elements don't fit in the full setting. Before taking decisions on the future of the liturgy, we have first to come to a historico-theological analysis of its past. Therefore, the purpose of this article is not only to give a historical, but also a theological study of the relations between the Church in Mesopotamia and the Indian Christian community. For this reason we have to consider the following topics: Were there hierarchical relations between the Persian and the Indian churches? Was the present East Syrian liturgy imposed on the Indian Church? Finally there is the question of inculturation: how far can and should we go, what is the motivation, what are the limits?

1. THE CHURCH OF THE EAST AND THE SYRO MALABAR CHURCH

Even before the coming of Christianity, India had commercial relations with Mesopotamia, Palestine, and other Aramaic-speaking countries of the Middle East. "Muzuris", Cranganore, the later See of the Metropolitan of India, was an important centre in those days¹. One of Emperor Asoka's edicts was promulgated in Aramaic². Since the arrival of Christianity, we find still more witnesses of commercial relations between the two regions³.

India and the Jews

The first authentic record of a contact between Dravidians and Jews is recorded in the Bible: 1 Kings 9:28; 10:22 and 2 Chronicles 9:21; Solomon's fleet imported from "Ophir" and "Tarshish" ivory, apes, peacocks, gold and silver. The words used for ivory, apes and peacocks are foreign words written in Hebrew script. The word

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1. Cf. Pliny the Elder (=79AD), quoted in G.Moraes: *History of Christianity*, pp.35.; anonymous author of *Periplus Maris Erythreoi* (2nd c. AD), quoted in William Logan: *Malabar*, reprint, Trivandrum, 1981, p. 103; cf. T.V. Philip: *East of the Euphrates*, pp.9 if
 2. Cf. John Hubert Marshall : *Guide to Taxilla*, Delhi, 1936, 78f. quoted in P. Podipara : *The Thomas Christians and their Syriac Treasures*, p.82; B.N. Mukherjee: *Studies in the Aramaic Edicts of Ashoka*, New Delhi, 1984, p. 48.
 3. *Chronique de Seert*, PO 5 (1910), pp. 324; PO 7 (1911),p.160; PO 13 (1913), pp.440,490.
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used for peacock is tuki, an ancient Tamil word tukkim, or in ancient Malayalam tokei, according to Caldwell, the specialist in comparative study of the Dravidian languages. The ancient, poetical word is tokei, "bird with the tail" (avis caudata)⁴. Apes in Hebrew is kop, in Sanskrit and ancient Malayalam kapi. Ivory in Hebrew is senhabbin, "teeth of elephant"; the word for elephant in Hebrew is hab, in Sanskrit habh. Some Greek versions of the Bible render Ophir as Sopara, which was the capital of a kingdom North of Kerala, while there was near Quilon a coastal city called Tarisa⁵. These animals are not found in Palestine or neighbouring countries, so it is reasonable that their original names accompanied them to Palestine. In Ex. 35 we see that cinnamon and cassia, which were produced mainly in Malabar and Ceylon, not in Palestine, were in use for the temple.

We find references to Jewish colonies in Cranganore (Kodungallure, Muzuris) in

the sixth century BC after the Babylonian captivity: The Bene-Israel, at Kalyan near Bombay, traces its beginnings back to Jesus' life-time; the arrival of Jewish immigrants at the Malabar Coast could be situated after 70 or 136 AD⁶. At least every three year a ship came from Rome to India; according to Plinius even every year⁷. In 47 AD Hippalus discovered that when one sailed with the monsoon winds, one could reach India much faster: ships could go and return during the same year⁸. After this discovery, Indians were numerous in Egypt, and many Arabians dwelt in India⁹. The Jewish colonies must have attracted the apostle to India. It is noteworthy that the seven churches, according to tradition founded by St. Thomas, are all situated near Jewish colonies which historians mention¹⁰. Of Chayal we have no evidence, but we know that it was an important marketing center, so Jews might have settled here also. The presence of a rite of Paschal meal among the Thomas Christians is another

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4. Cf. Rae: *The Syrian Church...* p. 136; Caldwell: *Grammar of the Dravidian Languages*, Turner, 1875, pp. 91f.
 5. Thomas Puthiakunnel : *Jewish Colonies...*, p.188.
 6. Cf. SS. Koder: *Kerala and her Jews*, Ernakulam, 1965; Thomas Puthiakunnel in: *Souvenir*, 400th Anniversary of the Cochin Synagogue, Ernakulam, pp.91ff.; Mosseh Pereyra de Paiva, *idem*, pp.38ff.; Moffett Samuel Hugh: *A History of Christianity in India. Vol. 1: Beginnings to 1500*, p.38.
 7. Quoted in W. Logan: *Malabar*, p.289. C. Illickamury in his Response to M. Vellanickal's paper in *The Life and Nature of the St. Thomas Church...*, p.107 asserts that "modern scholars" (he means K. Luke) refute the coming of Solomon's fleet to India: his ships would be too fragile to undertake the long and violent journey; only in the 4th century AD. C. Illickamury denies also the coming of Jews before the sixth century.
 8. A. Mattam Abraham: *The Liturgy St. Thomas introduced...*, p.34. According to Ian Gillman and Hans-Jozchim Klimkeit: *Christians in Asia before 1500*, p. 156: around 110BC by Eudoxos; in Jesus' lifetime there should have been 120 ships per annum between Egypt and India.
 9. Warmington E.H.: p.78.
 10. Moses de Paiva: *Noticias de Judeos do Chochim*, Amsterdam, 1686. quoted in Puthiakunnel: *Jewish Colonies...*, p. 189.
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indication. Another confirmation are the many manuscripts, we find in Kerala, copies of Syriac writers going from the fourth until the fifteenth centuries, such as Ephrem, Aphrahat, Daniel of Tella, etc. There are 11 libraries having collections of Syriac manuscripts, one of the most important being that of Pampakuda with 135 books and 305 manuscripts, out of which 41 are liturgical: hymns, prayers, rituals, lectionaries¹¹. Though they are not older than the 17th century due to the difficulty of keeping palm leafs in a wet climate, where rain and insects cause much damage, their nucleus goes back to pre-Diamper times.

India and Persia

Since one of the trade routes between India and the West passed through Persia, it is quite possible that Christian merchants from these regions have come to settle down in Kerala. According to a tradition kept among the Thomas Christians¹², among those converted by St. Thomas were also Jews. We will not treat on the matter of the coming of St. Thomas to India: enough studies exist on this matter. Also, his coming to India has no direct influence on our topic, because even if India was evangelized only by his disciples, we come to the same result: the Indian and Persian Churches share the same common apostolic

tradition. It is a fact that most of the Syrians, today as in the past, consider themselves to be descendants of the apostle's converts, whence their name of "St. Thomas' Christians".

We have many references to early links between Persia and India¹³; although in the earliest ones there is incertitude on the meaning of the term 'India'.

1. Eusebius of Caesarea (+340) narrates that in 189 Demetrius, bishop of Alexandria, received a message from India asking for missionaries. Alexandria was one of the important cities in the world, a merchant as well as intellectual center containing the greatest Jewish colony in the diaspora¹⁴. Pantaenus, head of the school, went for some time. His successor, Clement, speaks about Indian Christians. St. Jerome (letter 30) says that Pantaenus preached to the "Brahmanas" of India. At this occasion he found the Gospel of Matthew. It is India, because of the mention of Brahmanas; is it North or South India?

2. Some authors claim that Thomas, a Manichean (Manes was Persian), visited Malabar in 277. For Dr. Burnell, this Thomas evangelized India because Christians were called manigramakkar, i.e., belonging to Manes' village. In reality mani means jewel; manigramakkar = jewellers¹⁵. The story is based on Theodoret (+458) but

11. cf. J.C. England: *The Hidden History*..., pp.63f. & 119-121; Van der Ploeg J.P.M: *The Syriac Manuscripts of St. Thomas Christians*, Bangalore, Dharmaram Publications, 1983.

12. Written witness of St. Thomas apostolate in India: *Acts of Judas Thomas* (3th C.), *the Doctrine of the Apostles* (4th C.), St. Ephrem, St. Gregory of Tours, etc.

13. Cf. F.E. Keay : *A History of the Syriac Church* pp.16-36; p.Podipara: *The Thomas Christians*, pp. 63-100.

14. Eusebius of Caesarea: *Ecclesiastical History* 5:10:2; St. Jerome: *Ep. 70 Ad Magnum*.

15. Cf. G.M. Rae: *The Syrian Church in Malabar*, pp.372f.

according to *Acta Disputationis* and Epiphane, both anterior sources, Thomas went to Syria (for Epiphane "Judea"). Theodoret probably misread "Joudaion" as "India".

3. A palm leaf entitled *Keralathile Margavazhiyude Avasta*, "Affairs of the Christianity in Kerala" narrates that 72 converted Christian families in Kaverippoopattanam, because of persecution, emigrated to Korakkani (Quilon), where already Christians were living¹⁶.

4. Between 295 and 390 Bishop Dudi or David left Basra for 'India'¹⁷, where he converted many people.

5. According to Gelasius (475Ad) at the council of Niceae (325) was a bishop, John, "Metropolitan of Persia and of Great India" according to the Syriac list. Generally it is believed to be a mistake for John of Perrhe¹⁸. In the lists published by Gelzer¹⁹, he calls himself as "John of Persia", or "the Persian". It has been suggested that Gelasius unconsciously imported into an earlier period of the council a state of things which was true in his time, when India received its bishops from Persia. Jacob Kollaparambil recently asserted that he was

the Metropolitan of Arbela according to the *Chronicle of Arbela*²⁰.

6. According to tradition the Catholico of the East sent in 345 Uraha Mar Yausef was sent to India, and with him the hierarchical link between Persia and India started²¹. A reason for this could be the decision of the Council of Niceae (canons 4 & 6) which prescribed that for episcopal ordination there be at least three bishops. Since the Indian Church was too small for such a set up, it had to depend on another Church.

7. The historian Rufinus reports that Meropius, a Christian philosopher, visited 'India' with two relations, Frumentius and Oedesius. He was murdered, the two boys spared and taken in service of the king. When the king was dead, they assisted the queen and spread Christianity. Frumentius went to Alexandria and urged the bishop, Athanasius, for help. Frumentius became bishop and returned to 'India' (356). But Athanasius mentions a Frumentius in Ethiopia, not in India.

8. The Arian historian Philostorgius (9th C) records that emperor Constantius sent a mission to Arabia under direction of an Arian bishop, Theophilus 'the Indian'

16. *Keralathil Marga Vazhiyute Avastha*: Manuscript, quoted in C.V. Cheriyan: *A History...* p.64; cf. Koodapuzha: *Christianity in India*, pp.56f.; F. Houtart: *Genesis...* who analyses the copper plates and popular songs.

17. Cf. T.K. Joseph: *The Malabar Christians...*; A. Mingana: *The Early Spread...* p.32; *Chronique de Seert*, (11th century) PO 4, p. 236.

18. *Chronique de Seert*, PO 4, pp. 292f.; "Bishop of Beit Garmai" ;cf Adrien Fortescue: *The Lesser Eastern Churches*, p. 46, note6; Gelasius of Cyzicus: *Historia Concilii Nicaeni* PG 75:1342ff.

19. *Patron Nicaenorum nomina latine, graece, coptice, syriace, arabice, armeniace.*(ed.) H. Gelzer e.a., B.G. Teubner, 1898, new ed. 1995.

20. J. Kollaparambil: *Sources on the Hierarchical ...*, p.166.

21. J. Kollaparambil: *Sources on the Hierarchical...*, p. 166; cf. idem: *The Babylonian Origin...*, pp. 37-81.

around 354 AD. After visiting the Homeritae, also called Sabaeans or Indians, "The went to other districts of 'India'". He was a native of the Maldives. He corrected abuses, such as remaining seated during the reading of the gospel²². Here 'India' seems to be an autonomous church with its own observances.

9. Thomas of Cana (canaanite, merchant) is believed to be Armenian (rather Aramaean) or Persian. A local tradition says that in 345 the Catholicos of Seleucia-Ctesiphon sent Thomas of Jerusalem together with Joseph, bishop of Edessa and 400 priests, deacons and faithful from Bagdad, Ninive and Jerusalem. Another tradition²³ limits this story to a mission of Thomas by the bishop of Edessa. May be these Christians were escaping from the persecution under Shapur II (310-379) in Persia. There were three copper plates on which king Cheraman Perumal gave some privileges to the Christians. A manuscript kept in British Museum, dated 1604 containing a full translation of the grants, states that this king died 1258 years before²⁴. The plates were still existing in 1604: Francis Roz and Anthony de Gouvea (*Jornada*) wrote about them. May be there

is confusion with copper plates of a later date (cf. *postea*). According to others this event took place between 780 and 900 Or in 345 the Catholicos was in the prison, and after his martyrdom the see was vacant for 20 years²⁵. According to Monserrate and Dionysio it was consequent on the arrival of Thomas that the Indians accepted the Chaldean liturgy because they got their bishops from Persia and because of their attachment to Syriac, Christ's language.

11. Isho'dad in his commentary on the Romans wrote that one Daniel, an Indian priest, helped Mar Komai in his translation of the Epistle to the Romans from Greek into Syriac (425)²⁶. This could be an indication that Greek was (also) a liturgical language at that time in India. If it was Syriac, as thinks Mingana, why does need Mar Komai the help of Daniel ? There is also a Greek inscription on a church bell made in 461 AD in Kuduthuruthy near Kurvalangad²⁷. Later Greek yield place to Syriac.

12. Ma'ana, Metropolitan of Riwardashir(Persia) sent to India a Syriac translation of the works of Diodore and Theodore (470)²⁸.

22. Philostorgius, *Ecclesiasticae Historiae*, L.3, c.4-6. PG 65: 483-485.

23. Cf. letters such as *Shovala* according to the system called *Paraperu*.

24. G.T. Mackenzie : *Travancore State Manual*, Vol.2, 1906, pp. 139f.; cf. Bernard of St. Thomas: *A Brief Sketch*...,pp.9f.

25. Mingana : *The Early Spread*..., p.44, note; Rae, p.163; Logan, vol.1, p.203; Gouvea (16th C.).

26. Cf. T.K. Joseph: *The Malabar Christians*... ; Mingana: *The Early Spread*.. pp.28-32.

27. Cf. Berenard: *Mar Thoma Kristhianikal* (Malayalam), vol.1, p.303; T.K. Joseph: *A Travencore Inscription in Greek Script*, *Journal of Indian History* 27, p.184, cited in Moraes, *The History*....pp. 71f.

28. Chronique de Scert, PO 4, p. 117; cf Joseph: *The Malabar Christians*... ; Mingana: *The Early Spread*...; p.31

13. Because of the persecution under Shapur II many Christians emigrated from Persia. Basing himself on the *Gaudavaho* of Vakpati (8th C.), Moraes dates their settlement in Kerala in the fifth century²⁹. Noteworthy is the mention of the Catholicos of Seleucia in the *tubdon*, in the Malabar Jacobite liturgy.

14. In "Caliana" an Alexandrian merchant, Cosmas Indicopleustes, 'Indian voyager' (522 AD) found a Persian bishop, priests and Christians (cf. his book *Christian Topography*). Caliana is in the same Indian Sea as the island of Dioscoris (Socrota) and Taprobane, i.e., Ceylon. He found also Christians in "Male where pepper grows". It was the time that the Persians became more maritime and started to evangelise other countries³⁰. From this period on we are certain of the hierarchical link between Persia and India.

15. Some gifts were brought from India to Patriarch Sabriso I (596 - 604)³¹.

16. A *periodeutes*³² called Bodh visited India as a delegate of the Chaldean Patriarch Ezechiel (+581). This Bodh knew well Sanskrit.

17. Patriarch Iso'Yahb II (+646) sent

bishops to India.

18. Patriarch Iso'Yahb III (+660) in his letter to Mar Simeon of Riwardasir in Persia deplores that not only Persia but also "India that extends from the border of the kingdom of Persia (Phares) to the country called Qalah, which is a distance of 1200 parasangs [7200 Km] was deprived of priestly succession". India was in the jurisdiction of this metropolitan. This is a clear indication of a hierarchical relation³³. Was this Mar Simeon, the Catholicos of Persia, appointed by the Patriarch of Antioch, in opposition to the Catholicos of Babylon³⁴. It seems rather that Simeon had broken his relations with his own patriarch because of "greed and material gain", as says Isho 'Yahb in another letter³⁵. Consequently India henceforth was deprived of bishops. These testimonies prove that Malabar was directly under Persia proper and indirectly under Seleucia. Due to these interior divisions in Persia, prelates were sent at irregular intervals and as a consequence Christianity disappeared from the East Coast of India, the people lapsing into their former practices in the absence of priests.

29. G.M. Moraes: *The History of Christianity ...*; pp.63f.; Vakpati: *Gaudavaho*, vv. 431-9

30. Cf E. Tisserant Eugene, tr. E.R. Hambye: *Eastern Christianity in India*, p.14.

31. *Chronique de Seert*, PO 13, p.497; E.R. Hambye : *The Syrian Church in India*. pp.379.

32. Cf. Tisserant: *Eastern Christianity...* p.14; Assemani : *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 3/2, pp. 219-22. A *periodeutas* is a delegate of the bishop for distant places.

33. Cf. Mingana: *The Early Spread...* pp. 32f.; idem: *History of Christianity*, p. 101.1

34. The See of Antioch got divided between Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians in about 543m cf. Le Quien, t.2, Paris, 1740, pp. 1086-8.

35. Ishoyahb: Letters II: 14:4 and 16:3-4, tr. in Young: *Handbook of Source-Materials...*, pp.319f. (nos 432f.)

19. Also the Persian cross venerated in St. Thomas' Mount Madras and those of the Valiapalli church in Kottayam (6th - 7th centuries), with their inscriptions in Pahlavi, language of the Persian Sassanian dynasty, are confirmations of the relations with Persia.

20. Patriarch Sliba Zcha (+728) (or according to others: Iso' Yahb III) raised the Indian Church to the metropolitan dignity.

21. Timothy I (8th C) took India away from the authority of the Persian Church and put it under his own jurisdiction³⁶. Ibn-Attib's "Law of Christianity" (11th C.) gives the contents of Timothy's first letter to the Indian Christians: In case of the election and ordination of the metropolitan (usually elected by the people in presence of the suffragan bishops) they must not follow the king's advice but the patriarch's; only after the later's approval will the affair be directed to the king. In the same letter Timothy abolished this practice that the Indian metropolitan was ordained by

placing the letter of the patriarch on the head of the candidate³⁷: henceforth he would ordain him personally. The Indian metropolitan had precedence over the Chinese one; but he could not participate in the election of the patriarch because he lived outside the empire³⁸. Timothy speaks also about monks working as missionaries: "Many monks cross the sea to India and China with nothing more than a staff and a begging-bag".³⁹

22. Assemani mentions numerous Nestorian communities in North, central and East India.

23. Two Persian bishops, Muruvan Saper Iso (Shapur, Sabriso) and Prodho (Aprot, Afras, Peroz) arrived in Quilon around 825⁴⁰. Ayyan, king of Venad, granted privileges, inscribed on copper plates, *sasanam*, kept in the Jacobite and Mar Thoma seminaries in Kottayam and the bishop's house of Thiruvalla⁴¹. They are called *Quilon or Tarisa Plates*. The Christians are called "Tarisa", orthodox, a name given to the Nestorians in China

36. Bar Hebraeus : *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum* 2, 172,236.ed. Paris-Louvain, 1877.

37. Cf. Ibn At-Tayib: *Figh an-Nasraniya*, vol..168(19). pp.120f., Syr.: CSCO 167, pp. 119ff.

38. Ebedjesus: *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio e Vaticanis codibus edita ab A. Mai. Rome, 1838, t.X, P. 141* (*Collectio canonum tractatus* 8, c.15); Maris et Slibae de Patriarchis Nestorianorum *Commentaria*, pars II, pp. 72f.; cf. J. Dauvillier: *Les Provinces Chaldeens..* pp. 270-272; A.C. Moule: *Christians in China before the Year 1550*, London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1930, pp. 20-22.

39. Cf. Young William G. : *Patriarch Shah and Caliph*, Rawalpindi, christian Study Centre, 1974, p.131.

40. Cf. Joseph: *the Malabar Christians..*; Mingana, *The Early Spread...*; Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity*; Podipara: *the Thomas Christians...*; p. 68; Rae: *The Syrian Church...*pp. 155-165.

41. A *sasanam* was granted in 774 by Vira Rghava Chakravarti (some date it of 1225, cf. Cheriyan: *A History...*; p.117), another by Sthanu Ravi Gupta (=Cheraman Perumal, Perumal = great man, king, Chera= Kerala; he was the last empor of kerala) in 824, cf. Rae: *the Syrian Church* .p. 372; William Logan (Madras Civil Service): *The Manual of the Malabar District*, Madras Government Press, 1887, vol.i., p.208; vol.2, app. 12. The absence of such privileges and royal protection in other areas of India can explain the disparition of Christianity in those regions; cf. Koodapuzha: *Christianity...*pp.63f.

and Tartary. There is also mention of Jews and manigrammakar.

24. Patriarch *Theodosius* (+855) granted a type of exemption demanding letters of communion and collections for the maintenance of the Patriarchal house both to be sent every six years.⁴² From now on the Indian Church was in regular contact with the Seleucian catholicate.

25. The Metropolitan of India held the tenth, 13th or 15th place among the metropolitans.⁴³

26. In the 12th century it was the Catholics of Baghdad who sent bishops to India.⁴⁴ Patna is mentioned as the seat of a metropolitan.

27. The Venetian traveller Marco Polo (+1293) on his journey to and from China passed through Mesopotamia and reported the following:

In the province of Mosul... they have a patriarch, whom they call Jacolit, who ordains archbishops, bishops and abbots and sends them to all parts of India to Cathay.⁴⁵

28. In the oldest liturgical document we possess, the colophon of the *Vatican Syriac Codex* 22, a Pauline lectionary written in the year 1301 at Crangannore, shows strong relationship between the Churches of

Seleucia and India; the Patriarch of Persia was designated as the supreme head:

This holy book was written.... in the time of the great captain and director of the holy catholic Church of the East... our blessed and Holy Father Mar Yahb Alaha V and in the time of bishop Mar Jacob Metropolitan and director of the holy see of the apostle Mar Thoma, that is to say, our captain and director of the entire holy church of Christian India.⁴⁶

29. In 1490 the Malabarians sent delegates to the Patriarch to ask for bishops: they got Mar Thomas and John; in 1503 four bishops were sent: Mar Thomas, Yahballaha, Jacob and Denha. After the death of the latest one, Mar Jacob, two bishops, Mar Abraham and Joseph were sent. At this time there were two patriarchs, a catholic and a non-catholic one. Mar Abraham, sent by the non-catholic, joined the Catholic communion. He was bishop in India until 1579. One Mar Simon was also sent by the non-Catholic Patriarch. He also joined the Catholic communion but left India in 1583.

30. Joseph the Indian in his narratives written in 1500 speaks about their submission under the Persian catholicos, who appointed the "patriarchs" of India and China.⁴⁷

42. Bar Herbracus: *Chronicon Eccles.* 2, 172; Mackenzie G.T.: *Christianity in Travencore*, p.5.

43. cf. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity...*, p.15.

44. Raulin F.: *Historia Ecclesiae Malabaricae cum Synodo Diamperitana*, Romae, 1745, p. 425.

45. *Navigazione et Viaggi* II, G.B. Ramusio (ed.), Venetia, 1583, f. 5, quoted in Kollaparambil: *Sources...*, p. 169.

46. Fol.93v.; J. Vellian Raza...; p.4.

47. A. Vallavanthara: *Indian in 1500 AD...*; pp. 168f.

31. Several manuscripts with works such as Nomocanon of Ebed Jesus, prove that the Chaladean prelates used to bring Chaladean law codes to Malabar, such as the *Vatican Syriac Codex 128* (1556).

32. In 1578 three representatives of the Thomas Christians wrote to the pope saying: "Our prayers are in the Syriac or Chaldaic language which was handed over to us by our Lord St. Thomas, and we and our predecessors have been taught this language"⁴⁸. From the language only is coming the term "Chaldean", not from any nation, because after the seizure of Babylon by the Persian king, Syrus the Great in 539 BC, the Chaldeans lost their identity, so there is no people or country or culture that could be called "Chaldean". The term was used since 1552 to designate those of the Church of the East who established explicit communion with Rome, but the same could apply for Syrian Christians in India.

As a conclusion of this part of our study, we find that somewhere between 345 and 522 a hierarchical link started between both Churches. We must not read our theology and law in these times: the hierarchical link consisted mainly in the sending of bishops, while the archdeacon of India, a local priest, took care of the administration. The Persian bishops took care of the sacramental and spiritual life of the community.

2. THE THOMAS CHRISTIANS AND THE EAST SYRIAN LITURGY

The Early Liturgy in India

From of old Thomas Christians were

using the East Syrian liturgy. They got this liturgy from the Mesopotamian Church. We do not know when exactly they got it, but from what we know we can come to certain probabilities. St. Thomas was considered as the apostle of India. As I mentioned already, I do not intend to study here the historicity of his personal coming to India since this has no direct importance for this study. For our purpose, it is enough to admit that in India and Persia evangelization was carried out by St. Thomas or his disciples. The apostle or his disciples, they themselves Jews, most probably performed some items of worship in Aramaic; other parts might have been celebrated in the local languages, but finally the language of the Jewish and Chaldean colonies prevailed.

The focal-point of his veneration was Edessa where his relics were kept. The first reference of a relation between Indian and Persian Christians can be found in the *Acts of Judas Thomas* (third century) which speaks of the relics of St. Thomas being carried from India to the "West", i.e., Edessa, a fact confirmed by St. Ephrem. The Edessan tradition passed over to the Church of Mesopotamia whose centre was Seleucia- Ctesiphon, later replaced by Bagdad. Edessan Christians were Judeo-Christians. They brought their form of worship at an early age to India. Hence the special spiritual bound between Indian and Mesopotamian Christians. It is possible that different liturgies were practiced, but both were close to the synagogal form of

48. Giamil S.: *Genuinae Relationes...*; Documentum 22, p. 85.

worship. With the establishment of hierarchical relations between the two churches came the growth towards uniformity. In this growth Edessa had the main influence, according to principles enuniated before, since it was a flourishing centre of Christian theology. In the seventh century the Church in India was put directly under the jurisdiction of the Church in Mesopotamia.

Mundadan asserts the following:

From tradition and history we are sure that the Indian Church from very early times depended on the East Syrian Church not only for its prelates but also for its manner of worship. Some of the pre-Diamper manuscripts still extant, the decrees and acts of Diamper, and many of the 16th century Portuguese accounts about the life and customs of the Christians are proof that the Indian Church adopted practices of the East Syrian Church for their worship and liturgy.⁴⁹ However, there can be no doubt that a number of local observances, not purely liturgical, connected with baptisms, marriages, funerals, etc., were in use among the St. Thomas Christians.⁵⁰

In general, the ancient liturgies developed in important Christian centres where metropolitans, Fathers, important monasteries and theological schools were situated. The early liturgies, after a period

of development, had tendency to go towards more uniformity inside a particular tradition. Generally, the liturgy of the city to which belongs the head of a Church (patriarch or metropolitan) was used.

For those belonging to the East Syrian tradition, the synod of Mar Isaac (410) prescribed that "Now and henceforth we will exercise the ministry according to the Western usage which the bishop Isaac and Marutha have taught us and which we have seen them accomplishing here in the church of Seleucy".⁵¹ This prescription is the very first liturgical legislation we find in history. This way of progressing was one of Baumstark's "laws": "The evolution of liturgical rites moves from diversity to uniformity". As explained by Fr. Taft it means that diverse local usage in a single area of liturgical diffusion solidify into relatively homogeneous liturgical family or "rite"⁵²

All the Christian liturgies share in common bible and tradition (especially the Church Fathers), but each liturgy is a biblico-patristic synthesis in its own way, with its own characteristics, indebted to the philosophy and culture of a particular time and place (following another law of Baumstark: "It seems to be of the nature of liturgy to relate itself to the concrete situations of times and places")⁵³ The faith

49. Cf. Tisserant: *Eastern Christianity* ...; p. 175; Synod of Diamper, Acts 3-7.

50. Mundadan: *History of Christianity* ...; p. 193.

51. Translated from the French, given by Chabot J.-B.: *Synodicon Orientale ou Recueil des Synodes Nestoriens*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1902, p. 266. "Western" here means the region of Antioch.

52. Robert F. Taft: *Comparative Liturgy fifty Years after Anton Baumstark* in: *Worship* 73/6 (1999), 525.

53. Anton Baumstark: *Comparative Liturgy*, revised by B. Botte, tr. F.L. Cross, Westminster. The Newmann Press, 1958, p. 18.

is too high to be expressible in only one way. Each tradition is a different expression of the same depositum fidei coming to us from the apostles, enriched by different contributions of Fathers, Saints, theologians, monks, each of them a unique witness of the Tradition of the Church.

From there derives the importance of safeguarding scrupulously all these different traditions. Each liturgy in its final form is a patristic synthesis of bible and tradition. Each one is different, but all express the same faith in different terms⁵⁴. In such a Church the theology, spirituality, discipline and liturgy are more important factors than the cultural elements in which the Church has "incarnated", although they also have their importance. Therefore it is really wrong to deprive a church from its fundamental elements, such as its anaphoras, ritual for the sacraments, proper texts for liturgical year, while crying for inculturation meaning by that adoption of pagan texts, ceremonies and music.

Those places which were not Christian centres received their liturgies from centres, usually those near to them, or otherwise those who evangelized them (initially or at a later stage). There is no evidence that the Thomas Christians in India developed a liturgy of their own or that they followed another rite. The most ancient liturgical document we possess is the *Vatican Syriac Codex 22*, an Pauline epistolary of the East Syrian cathedral tradition written in

Cranganore in 1301. There is no single evidence of another type of liturgy or language used in India before the coming of missionaries.

It is the will of the Church, expressed on different occasions that those churches which, be it without fault from their part, have fallen away from their ancient traditions, should return to them.⁵⁵ The indo-Chaldeans have therefore to return to their ancient patrimony. This does not exclude adjustment to modern needs provided that these form an organic whole with the ancient authentic roots of this liturgy. Adaptation is good, even necessary, but should not be corruption or a replacement of the own tradition by another (Christian or Hindu!) one. The writer of this article has with his own ears heard how the present director of the National Catechetical and Liturgical Institute in Bangalore advocated 'in-religionation' instead of 'adaption' of pre-conciliar and 'inculturation' of post-conciliar times because: "Not only Bible but also the sacred books of other religions are inspired!"

Not Indian but Chaldean?

The apostles of inculturation pretend that a foreign (Chaldean) liturgy was imposed on the Indian Christians without any regard to their culture. Three questions are important: First is the East Syrian liturgy a foreign liturgy? Secondly is its

54. Cf. Vatican II: *Lumen Gentium* No 23.

55. Pius XI, at the plenary meeting of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches on 1-12-1934; *Motu Proprio Sancta Dei Ecclesia*, AAS 30 (1938), p. 154; Vatican II *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, No.6.

nature adapted to the Indian culture; and lastly was this liturgy imported without any adaptation or inculturation?

Foreign Liturgy

Is the East Syrian liturgy a foreign liturgy? It depends on how we took to the things. If we look to the geographical origin, yes it is: it is as foreign as the gospel itself. If we have to reject everything what is foreign, we have to reject Christianity itself, as preach the Hindu extremists. To Join the B.J.P. would be the ideal form of inculturation. We should not forget that the Gospel was preached in India by people of Semitic culture, who had already since many centuries regular relations with India. The East Syrian liturgy in its oldest elements is essentially Semitic, more than any other liturgy. It agreed with the way in which the missionaries exposed the faith. It formed an organic unity, not only with the catechesis, but even with the books on which this catechesis was based.

Adapted to the Indian Culture?

Regarding the second question, if the nature of the East Syrian liturgy is adapted to the Indian culture, we cannot answer properly without having clear definitions. Is there such a thing as "*the* Indian culture"? Culture is always closely relinked with language, religion and literature. Is there an Indian religion or an Indian language? A frequently used motto says: "As languages, religions, races we are many, as a country we are one". There are as many cultures in India as there are languages, etc. Those who advocate an unique Indian rite are thus anti-inculturation, or they want to suppress the

cultures of the minorities by that of the majority. The writer of this article has assisted an "Indian Mass" in Kottayam, Kerala, celebrated in Sanskrit, using only elements of North Indian Aryan culture. It seems that after thirty years of inculturation, still the promoters of inculturation are not able to find the way on which the celebration of the eucharist could be adapted to Kerala culture. How can Christians who are since many centuries used to Christian worship adjust to a "mass" heavily loaded with elements and terms of Hindu worship in tunes and sacred language of Hindu cult?

The East Syrian liturgy is well adapted to the Indian mind: the most specific characteristic of this tradition is its Judeo-Christian origin. Its liturgy is a "baptism" of the Jewish synagogue worship as it was practiced in Jesus' time. Because of the isolation of the Persian kingdom outside the Roman empire, there is clearly less influence of the Roman and Hellenistic cultures than in other liturgies. This liturgy has conserved its original Semitic form by using frequently repetitions, the mention of the 'Name', parallelism, synonyms, the recitation of psalms, readings of the law and prophets, the use of a bema, bodily gestures such as the orientation towards a holy point, the turning of the hands upwards while bowing, and especially the structure of its anaphoras in imitation of the Birkat-ha-Mazon, the Jewish table prayer for Easter.

A second reason why this liturgy is appropriate for India is the opportunity it gives for active participation by people. Participation is made possible in many

ways: by reception of H. Communion, by different types of gestures and bodily attitudes, by the responses to the dialogues and biddings, the common recitation of the Creed, the Our Father, litanies and psalms, and the singing of hymns. Their participation is frequently awaked and encouraged by the admonitions of the deacons, who also instruct them of the necessary spiritual and bodily attitudes: "stand up, bow your heads, lift up your thoughts"). They are also encouraged to grow in communion by their frequent praying for the hierarchy and the other members of the community, even those who are broken away or those who do not yet belong to it. Many elements were very appropriate since they corresponded to practices existing all over India: the clear separation of a sanctuary from the rest of the temple, the abundant use of incense, the frequent use of hymns and prayers of which words are repeated, purifications, the symbolism of light, the preparation for feasts by fasting and prolonged prayer.

The East Syrian liturgy was adopted and used by the St. Thomas Christians for at least 14 centuries; it has become a part of their culture. Since these Christians are Indians, their culture forms part of Indian culture. To say that their rite is foreign or un-Indian is an affront to them.

Was the Chaldean Liturgy Imported without Adaptation or Inculturation?

To answer our third question we have to compare the liturgy as celebrated in India

with the way it was celebrated in Mesopotamia. There exist three elements of adaptation.⁵⁶

1. An Indian *theology* which expresses, explains, coordinates, illustrates and defends Christian dogmas by means of Indian philosophical categories. In this area the St. Thomas Christians have not contributed much.

2. An Indian *way of life* permeated with Christian ideas in food, dress, customs, etc. In this the St. Thomas Christians have contributed much: they kept the Indian way of life completely. Their daily life closely resembled that of their Hindu brethren: in their dress, many marriage and funeral customs, but they had some distinctive signs.

3. A *mode of worship* which is both Indian and Christian. Here the adaptation was partial, mainly in the sacramental: We find many elements of inculturation, mainly in the architecture, but also in the rituals, sacraments and sacramentalia where we see that the Indian Church had quiet a number of practices specific to India, different from those in Persia. Externally churches looked like Buddhist or Hindu pagodas, except that they had a cross on the roof and in front. In pali (ancient sacred Buddhist language) the word *palli* is still in use among Christians to denote their churches. Monserrate in the 16th century wrote that their churches "were built in the same manner as the houses of the idols".⁵⁷ The same can be said for furniture, such as

56. Placid Podipara: *The Thomas Christians and Adaptation*, pp. 17If.

57. Cited in A.M. Mundadan: *Traditions of St. Thomas Christians*, p.173.

lamps, umbrellas, musical instruments, etc. Festivals and processions were held like those of the Hindus, but carrying Christian symbols. As in Hindu temples flags were hoisted for feasts and edibles were given to those who offered money. Pilgrimages, ceremonial baths, frequent fasts, and offerings to the church were practiced.

For baptism usually the name of the paternal grandfather or grandmother was given to the first child; that of the maternal one to the second. The punishment and penance imposed on public sinners were fixed by the parochial assembly. The absolution was given by a priest beating the penitent symbolically with a bundle of sticks⁵⁸. Priests used to bless the sick by reading the gospel over them and by putting on their bodies palm leaves with scriptural texts, may be an imitation of the Hindu mantram.

It was the parish assembly who presented candidates for priestly ordination. Priests were divided into two classes : some among them never consumed wine or meat and led an austere life⁵⁹. The St. Thomas Christians had great respect for the Eucharist: they bow on the floor during elevation, priests used to keep silence before mass; daily the eucharist bread was freshly baked, chalices were adorned with small bells. On the days they received communion, they would not take siesta and

abstained from marriage intercourse⁶⁰. Water mixed with earth taken from St. Thomas' tomb was used as holy water, and was given as a drink for the sick people.

In the Qurbana celebrated in India we find following differences, compared to the text used in Persia: the *Puqdanakon*, "your commandment", in the beginning; the rite of prostration before the anaphora. Today, the most solemn form of celebrating the qurbana, the *raza*, with the above mentioned rites together with *turgame* (poetical homilies) before epistle and gospel, is known only in India.

Especially, marriage and funeral customs were adapted to the local culture. To give a few examples: instead of the Chaldean rite of "shutting and opening the bridal chamber" in India is practised *adachuthura*, a solemn bath of the bridegroom, who is called by his mother-in-law but comes only after she promised some gifts. As among the Jews, the marriage service of the Thomas Christians consists of two parts: the betrothal, and the solemnization of the marriage. Contrary to Latin custom, among the Jews⁶¹, Hindus and Syrians the bride stands at the right of the bridegroom. First the rings are blessed. It is the priest who puts the rings. Though the ring is not known to most of the Indians today, it is the oldest marriage emblem of the East. It was used as a seal by which orders were

58. Paulinus a S. Bartholomaeo: *Viaggio alle Indie Orientali*, Roma, 1796, p.137.

59. Vincenzo Maria, cap. 7

60. Cf. Dilva Rego: *Documentacao para a Historia dos Misseos dos Portugues do Oriente*, Lisboa, 1974; Vincenzo Maria, cap.6.

61. Cf. Ps.45:9

confirmed; the delivery of the ring was a sign that the donor endowed his authority to the one who received it. It is mentioned in the marriage hymns of the *Rig Veda*, but the wedding ring seems to be a rite borrowed originally from the Jews.

Next the "crowns" (in reality chains) are blessed and imposed on both heads in the way of a crown. This is a Syrian custom observed in Palestine. Finally, the priest places the *minnu* or tali round the bride's neck, the boy ties it; and the priest places the *manthrakodi*, a veil (today replaced by a sari), on the bride's head. The custom of tying the tali is taken from the co-religionists. The Christian tali is distinguished from the Hindu one by a cross of tiny seven or a multiple of seven beads; the usage of the veil comes from the Jews⁶². Other Semitic customs were the marriage processions and dowry, but the dowry is to be paid by the girl's side, and the procession is made to the bride's house. The couple is made to sit under a *pandal* (which together with the umbrellas used in the processions, were honours reserved to kings granted to them by royal privilege). The couple is met at the gate with lights carried by young women, and the girl has "to enter" in the *pandal*.

Other Semitic customs were: a newly married couple would only go to church after taking bath on the fourth day; a woman would not go to church for forty days after the birth of a male, and for eighty days for a female child; and Old Testament names were given to the children.⁶³ After a

burial a priest will bless a tender coconut, drink of it and give the rest to the relatives. All the subsequent celebrations in the house of the deceased, such as *pula* (on the 11th day), *chatham* (on the anniversary day), are Hindu, but christianised by prayers and the blessing of a priest.

The Thomas Christians had their own fasting days, most common, some different from the Chaldean, as the one on the eve of transfiguration, and the eight days preceding the Nativity of our Lady. Fast was observed from sunset to sunset and began with a bath. On Christmas night a priest used to bless a bonfire of dry wood and people used to go around it in procession. According to region, two different practices existed for the feast of Epiphany: some took bath during the vigil night in memory of Christ's baptism; others lighted torches and exclaimed: "EI paiya" (God is bright). July third was celebrated as their greatest feast, on 21 November they commemorated the landing of the apostle at Pallipuram, a village at the Malabar coast, and on 18 December was celebrated the feast of the miraculous cross. In connection with these festivals, devotees used to make *nerca*, offerings and agapes. But the most inculturated element was the observance of the Holy Week: the eating of unleavened bread on Holy Thursday with a special rite, the drinking of bitter water on Good Friday, silence and abstinence from manual labour was kept during these holy days.

Fr. Placid gives the reasons why adaptation in liturgy was only partial: as Sanskrit is holy for the Hindus, so was Aramaic, the language of Christ and the

62. Cf. S.G. Pothan: *The Syrian Christians of Kerala*, pp. 67-69.

63. Synod of Diamper, Session 7, decree 16 and Session 9, decree 5.

apostles holy for the Christians. Secondly, the Hindu temple worship is performed by a priest alone, it is not a congregational worship, the prayers and ceremonies of the Hindu priest are not visible or responded by the assembly, contrary to Christian worship. Thirdly, the Hindu sacred writings were until recently strictly reserved for Hindus of high castes. Fourthly, the Christian community in India was mixed from its very origin: there were Jewish converts among them, they could not think of Hinduising their liturgy. At the contrary, due to their presence, many prayers and ceremonies were borrowed from the Old Testament, with the necessary adaptations to Christianity, from there the selection of readings: law, prophets, epistle, gospel; and the separation of the liturgy of the word at the bema with the specific Christian worship, the eucharist, in the sanctuary.

As a conclusion we can quote Andrews Thazhath:

The relationship with East Syrians was a gradual one. The Indian Church happily shared their rite and accepted their bishops. the Latin rule was more an imposed one than part of an organic growth... Under the East Syrian rule, the Thomas Christians could, to a great extent, maintain their identity of rite and culture through the leadership of the 'Archdeacon of the Thomas Christians'. Only in those matters where the Bishops who came from Persia had involvement, the East Syrian practices / rites were more

shared by the Thomas Christians.... ordination, Eucharist, Baptism, Confirmation, divine Office..., while they kept up local practices for sacraments, like marriage and anointing the sick⁶⁴.

Fidelity to our Semitic roots means fidelity to the apostolic tradition. It is not more imposition from outside than the reception of the Gospel itself. To celebrate the liturgy according to the East Syrian tradition means not to copy from another Church, in occurrence the Assyro-Chaldean one. Both Churches, the Persian and the Indian Churches are sharing the same tradition, namely that of the Judeo-Christians, which is the closest related to the apostles and first disciples. The Charism of both churches is to show the link and continuation of Old and New Testament.

3. SOUND INCULTURATION

Theological Principles and Criteria of Inculturation

The theological principles and criteria of inculturation derive from the Christian revelation, which has an universal character: it concerns all human beings of all times; its content is not bound to a particular people, time or place; but the divine revelation was and will be communicated in everyone's cultural context. The theological principles and criteria which rule this inculturation are the following⁶⁵

1. The first analogate of inculturation is the incarnation of Christ. The fact that the revelation of God in Christ was given in and through a specific culture (Jewish)

64. Response to J. Kollaparambil in: *The Life and Nature of the St. Thomas Christian Church*..., p. 185.

65. cf. E.J. Kilmartin: *Particular Liturgy*..., pp.93-95.

means that it can and must be mediated in each particular culture. Pope John Paul II in a message to the Plenary Session of the International Council for Catechetics in September 1994 wrote:

Therefore an authentic theology of Incarnation must indicate the co-ordinates of inculturation, marking the limits beyond which the illusion of "translating" would be "betrayal". The proclamation of the Incarnation as a unique and unrepeatable historical fact is the cornerstone of every process of inculturating the faith. The Son of God became incarnate once and for all in a specific place at a specific time. Every culture open to Christ must establish a permanent link with the concrete history of the Incarnation, with the biblical words that reveal it, with the ecclesial tradition that has handed it down to us, with the sacramental signs in which it continues to be at work.⁶⁶

The gospel message surpasses all cultures and is meant for the whole of humanity. But the incarnation is a historical event, having taken place in a particular time and place: Christ became incarnate in Palestine as a Jew in a Semitic cultural milieu. His first disciples were of the same background. The Jews were God's chosen people. Semitic culture was in God's plan the chosen way. Christ made use of their culture to convey His message. Many of His expressions, such as the parables, can

only be fully understood in the Jewish background with a minimum knowledge of Jewish sources, geography and historical context of Palestine in the years 30⁶⁷. A number of His actions and words become unintelligible if we interpret them with our today's Western conceptions. Christianity, especially Syriac Christianity, is inseparably connected with a Semitic background.

Pope John Paul has expressed this clearly:

The Gospel message cannot be purely and simply isolated from the culture in which it was first inserted (the biblical world or more concretely the cultural milieu in which Jesus of Nazareth lived), nor without serious loss from the cultures in which it has already been expressed down the centuries; it does not spring spontaneously from any cultural soil; it has always been transmitted by means of an apostolic dialogue which inevitably becomes part of a certain dialogue of cultures.⁶⁸

Consequently, in order to find Christ, every culture has to establish a link with the concrete history of the incarnation, with the Biblical world that revealed it with the ecclesial tradition that has handed it down to us, with sacramental signs in which it continues to be at work⁶⁹.

2. The first witness and interpretation of the revelation of God is the Bible. This source remains the first norm and criterion of the Christian faith and life. Hence there exists no Christian liturgy without Bible.

66. OS, English edition, 5.10.1994, p.4.

67. Cf. my *Palestine in Jesus' Time*, Kottayam, Oirsi, 1998.

68. *Catechisi Tradendae* No. 53.

69. John Paul II: Message to ICC, *L'Osservatore Romano* 5.10.1994, p.4.

3. The Christian faith, grounded on the revelation, has *logical* priority vis-a-vis specific cultures; but while the faith is bound to no culture, there is a *temporal* priority of the concrete cultures with respect to the concrete expression of the Christian faith. There exists thus always a liturgy which is already inculturated in past cultural traditions.

4. Since the Church is dependent on no culture, she is open to all cultures. But the Church is a communion of individual Churches. These Churches are embedded in concrete cultures, their character is stamped by these cultures. They have the task of inculturating the Gospel in all spheres of the life.

5. The understanding of the faith will vary in new cultural contexts because the way of conceiving reality differs from one culture to another. We cannot predict which forms the practice of the faith will take in a new cultural situation; they will develop spontaneously. We cannot impose our forms, neither those we use ourselves, nor those we imagine will be theirs.

6. Certain basic structures however must be found everywhere: all should correspond to the normative teaching of Scripture and apostolic tradition. For the liturgy we should find following elements:

a. The subject of liturgy is a community of baptized structured according to the apostolic tradition.

b. The purpose of liturgy is to deepen communion with the Father through Christ, unique mediator.

c. The content is the Paschal Mystery⁷⁰: following structural elements must be found in every liturgy: assembly in the name of Jesus, proclamation of the Gospel, response by confession of faith, praise of God, thankful remembrance of God's promises and deeds, and their sharing as a foretaste.

7. In the matter of selection of cultural elements **distinction** must be made between social and specific religious elements. Religious elements are often incompatible or difficult to harmonize with Christian faith or its expression, at least as long as they are specifically bound to a particular religion still practiced, especially when it is followed by the majority of the population.

Methods of Inculturation of Liturgy

Four basic rules for inculturation are as follows:⁷¹

1. The process must begin with an adequate knowledge of the peculiarity of the Christian liturgy, as well as the rules and customs of the particular culture, their history and genuine meaning.

2. Inculturation of liturgy cannot be isolated from inculturation of the Gospel in other spheres of life. For liturgy is the expression of the faith experience of the community.

70. cf. Anthony George Kollampampil: *From Symbol to Truth. A Syriac understanding of the Paschal Mystery*, Roma, Eph. Liturgiche, 2000, pp.30-46.

71. cf. E.J. Kilmartin : *Particular Liturgy ...*, pp.90f.

3. Inculturation must be carried out with an eye to the non-Christian members of the culture and their reaction. But attention must first be given to the members of the local Christian community and to the correspondence with the expression of faith of the universal Church, for what is at stake is greater unity and fullness in greater variety.

4. The inculturation of the liturgy must begin with those elements which are less binding in structure and content, such as processions and the liturgy of the word; then those elements which do not touch the inner structure and core of the main rites, such as hymns and gestures.

Recent Trials of Inculturation

In 1969 Archbishop Lourdasamy sent to all Indian Bishops of the Latin Rite the so called "Twelve Points" asking them to vote on them and send the reply in two days time. Only 51 out of the 71 bishops could send in such short delay an answer: What is curious is that the Liturgical Commission could only vaguely state that the placets were between 34 and 35! (35, i.e., two third were required⁷²). It is interesting to look to some of the points:

1. The posture during mass, both for priests and faithful may be adapted to local usage, i.e., sitting on the floor, standing and the like; footwear may be removed also.

2. Genuflections may be replaced by the profound bow with the *anjali hasta*.

3. A *panchanga pranam* by both, priests and faithful, can take place before the liturgy of the word, as part of the penitential rite, and at the conclusion of the anaphora.

4. Kissing of objects may be adapted to local custom, i.e., touching the objects with one's fingers or palm of one's hand and bringing the hands to one's eyes or forehead.

5. The kiss of peace could be given by the exchange of *anjali hasta* or the placing of the hands of the giver between the hands of the recipient.

6. Incense could be made more use of in liturgical services. The receptacle could be the simple incense bowl with handle.

7. The vestments should be simplified. A single tunic-type chasuble with a stole (*angavastram*) could replace the traditional vestments of the Roman rite.

8. The corporal could be replaced by a tray (*thali* or *thambola thattu*) of fitting material.

9. Oil lamps could be used instead of candles.

10. The preparatory rite of the mass may include: a) the presentation of gifts.

b) welcome of the celebrant in an Indian way, e.g., with a single *arati*, washing of hands, etc.

c) the lighting of the lamp.

d) the greeting of peace among the faithful as a sign of mutual reconciliation.

72. Bishop Ignatius Gopu of Vishakapatnam in the New Leader of 22.6.1978: "For any major decision a two-thirds majority of the house is needed. In this case it was clearly lacking. Yet an approval was obtained from Rome and the Twelve Points were imposed on the country."

11. In the *Oratio fidelium* some spontaneity may be permitted both with regard to its structure and formulation of the intentions. However, the universal aspect of the Church should not be left in oblivion.

12. In the offertory rite and at the conclusion of the anaphora the Indian form of worship may be integrated, i.e., double or triple *arati* of flowers, and / or incense, and / or light.

These were the first desires of adaptation after Vatican II. Let us compare them to our Indo-Chaldean usages: we find in our qurbana the standing posture for the faithful, the profound bow as act of worship, the Indian way of kissing the objects and of giving the kiss of peace, the abundant use of incense, simple vestments consisting in a kind of humeral veil wrapped around the shoulders, a presentation of gifts in the preparatory rite of the mass, the greeting of peace among the faithful in the beginning of offices. The only things we do not find are those gestures borrowed from Hindu worship, such as *arati* and *panchanga pranam*. Is it not contradictory that the promoters of inculturation dispense with incense and prefer to keep Latin vestments. Why do they not adapt the Brahmin dress during puja: bare-bodied, because Hindu culture does not allow anyone to wear clothes above the waist while performing puja, nor does it permit the use of *angavastram*, a shawl over the shoulders when meeting a superior. In such a case an Indian who

respects his culture has to tie it round his waist and bow low before his superior. He can not squat on the floor. In Hinduism women are never allowed inside the sacred precincts of the altar. The same custom existed among the Chaldean Christians, but this is eliminated by the inculturalists! Hindu women do not touch or perform arati to a celibate Brahmin pujari⁷³ (priest) inside the sanctum sanctorum, but the inculturalist does not hesitate to shock his Hindu brother in this matter. He provides rather material to laugh at our aping his ceremonies in a wrong manner.

Christianizing Pagan Customs ?

All Christian liturgies have inherited from Judaism, but regarding the influence of pagan cults we have to distinguish between periods and modes of influence. As wrote Dom Botte:

The first Christian writers appear careful to avoid any compromise with paganism: even in their language they insist rather on what distinguishes and separates Christianity from paganism. It would therefore be false to suppose that the primitive Church made an effort to christianize pagan customs. Nevertheless, to the extent that the menace of paganism waned and the liturgy developed, the latter gradually admitted rites used by all religions: lustral water, blessed salt, lights, incense. It must be noted also that some of these customs may also derive from the Old Testament. Secondly, we must distinguish the kinds of influence that paganism exercised. To react is not to borrow⁷⁴.

73. Cf. A. Mattam: *Inculturation...*; p.130. He got this information from Hindu friends.

74. *The Church at Prayer*, vol.1, (ed.) A.G. Martimort, p.39; *L'Eglise en priere*, (ed.) Paris, Declee, p.42

He gives the example of the feast of Nativity: which was assigned to December 25 to oppose the pagan feast 'natalis invicti', linked with sun worship. The object of both feasts was entirely different. To say that the Church christianised a pagan feast is an inaccurate way of speaking: rather she substituted it. Other pagan borrowings bore only on peripheral elements of worship, in matters of linguistic form, of outward ceremonial, in the selection of certain calendar days for feasts, often as a substitution or cure of the superstition still tempting the recently converted. Only things which could be adapted in the Christian worship without compromising its specificity were used.

Also many rites of the imperial ceremonial were borrowed, but with precaution: "The Christians refused to drop even a single grain of incense on the burning coal in front of the emperor's statue; they refused the garland the emperor's image with flowers"⁷⁵

No Syncretism

Inculturation does not justify mutilation of the gospel message or any kind of syncretism. Its content must remain unchanged, only the mode of its presentation may vary. In no way may

inculturation compromise the specificity and integrity of the Christian faith⁷⁶. Inculturation is guided by two principles: fidelity to the deposit of the faith, and communion with the universal Church⁷⁷. In no way it may compromise the distinctiveness and integrity of the Christian faith⁷⁸.

The *Instruction on Inculturation* lays down the principle that inculturation should not appear as a going back to pre-Christian times or in any way diminish the unique nature of Christian revelation⁷⁹.

They will always be careful to avoid the danger of introducing elements that might appear to the faithful as the return to a period before evangelization.

The promoter of inculturation should first adopt fasting practices of his Hindu brothers. He can also learn from them on moral questions: His Holiness Jagadguru Shri Shankaracharya of Sringeri says : "Any step which is opposed to dharma cannot be supported. The human being must discipline self-control to achieve happiness"⁸⁰ The *Kathaka Sambiti* 31:7 states that there is no sin as heinous as killing or destroying semen. Another point is that in Indian tradition it is traditional to offer sacrifice turning to the East. The Indian

75. Joseph Jungmann: *The Early Liturgy*, pp. 129f. The present archbishop-cardinal of Mumbai, when he became archbishop offered without scruples incense to Hindu idols. It was in all the newspapers with photo!

76. Cf. John Paul II: *Redemptoris Missio*, No. 52; Paul VI: *Evangelii Nuntiandi* No 65 (1975).

77. Cf. John Paul II: *Redemptoris Missio*, No. 54.

78. Cf. Joannes Paulus II: *Redemptoris Missio* Nos 52-54.

79. *Instruction the Roman Liturgy and Inculturation*, Congregation for Divine Worship, 25.1.1994, No 32.

80. Quoted in Victor J.F. Kulanday: *The Paganization of the Church in India*, p. 57.

conception is that the door of heaven is in the East. The purpose is to sit turned to God's sight⁸¹. If the Hinduisers were honest, they should in these matters also fall in line with Hindu thought and not conveniently forget the Indian culture and thinking pattern.

Syncretism ultimately denies the uniqueness of Christ as Savior. The instruction on Inculturation says that liturgical inculturation must avoid all appearance of religious syncretism and gives examples:

The liturgy is the expression of faith and Christian life, and so it is necessary to ensure that liturgical inculturations not marked, even not in appearance, by religious syncretism. This would be the case if the places of worship, the liturgical objects and vestments, gestures and postures let it appear as if rites had the same signification in the Christian celebrations as they did before evangelization. The syncretism will still be worse if biblical readings, a chants or even prayers were replaced by texts from other religions, even if these contain undeniable religious and moral value.⁸²

In liturgy, the bible should not be replaced by scriptures of other religions; orthodoxy of worship has to be preserved; the substantial unity of the rite should be preserved: inculturation can only adapt existing rites, not create new families of rites. The ecclesial traditions of the Individual Churches which developed from the first centuries and were nourished by

the Fathers of the Church are the common patrimony of all Christians and must not be set aside in the process of inculturation. Inculturation should make the Christian patrimony more understandable to a given community, without making abstraction of its essential elements.

Paul VI's statement at the end of the Roman Synod in October 1974 spoke on the need of finding a better expression of faith to correspond to the racial, social and cultural milieus:

This is indeed a necessary requirement of authenticity and effectiveness of evangelisation; it would nevertheless be dangerous to speak of diversified theologies according to continents or cultures. The content of faith is either Catholic or it is not.

Inculturation and the Local Community

Inculturation of liturgy should develop and take shape from the community of believers. To be authentic, it should reflect their faith experience. A community which has newly found faith tries to give expression to its faith in ways and forms congenial to its culture and customs, provided that these are in harmony with the faith. This process must take place gradually, it must really be an expression of the community's Christian experience. It is not a work of a few experts, the result of erudite research⁸³. It cannot be a new ready made form of worship: converted

81. F. Kanichikattil :*To Restore...*, p. 140.

82. Congregation for Divine Worship: *The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation*, No 47.

83. Cf. Joannes Paulus II: *Redemptoris Missio* No 53

Hindus might feel a revulsion to their former practices. They should not be asked to return to what they had abandoned as meaningless or superstitious. What is more, Hindus, Muslims and tribal people have very different religious and social practices; the same differentiation exists between different peoples and castes. Hence the need for the actual involvement of the community of believers in the process of inculturation. A theoretician, especially when he is an outsider, may not grasp the feelings of that community. He might hinder the real process.

Inculturation in Old and New Churches

Inculturation is a spontaneous process coming from the community; it is the expression of the community's Christian life. Therefore there is an important distinction to be made between inculturation in new and in ancient churches. Newly converted begin to think in terms of their new faith and this transforms their life and culture gradually. This process will be different according to time and place, also depending of the grade of compatibility of the original culture with the Christian message. But if a people have lived their faith for several generations in a particular way, this experience has already become a part of their culture. Inculturation is primarily for those who have accepted the faith recently, so that they may "incarnate" it in their way of living. To borrow things from somewhere else, even from neighbours, to which they are not accustomed to, is equivalent to impose to them a unnecessary burden, as did the Judeo-Christian preachers in the first centuries or the Western missionaries, with

the difference that here the preachers do not impose their own culture (Christian), but one of another non-Christian community, often of the majority group.

Inculturation is first a matter for new communities where the Church encounters a new culture. The case of ancient Christian Churches is different: wherever the Church has been in existence for centuries, there has been already an integration, as is the case of the St. Thomas Christians (different from North India). The form of worship and way of Christian life has already become 'natural' to this community; it has become a part of its heritage and culture. There is no need for inculturating, still less should one impose an external culture to such a community.

The doctrine of the Church as expressed in Vatican II is that the liturgical and other traditions of the individual churches come from the apostles and are part of the divinely revealed undivided heritage of the Universal Church⁸⁴. The fulness of Christian tradition is not found in any of the Churches individually, but in the various ecclesial traditions together. All must preserve and foster the rich liturgical and spiritual heritage of their Church in order to preserve faithfully the fulness of Christian tradition⁸⁵. This is the reason why the Council asked the Eastern Churches to preserve their rites and introduce only changes to forward their own organic development. It they have fallen away, they are to strive to return to their traditions⁸⁶.

84. Vatican II, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* No1.

85. Vatican II, *Unitatis Redintegratio* Nos 15, 17.

86. Vatican II, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* No 6.

The liturgy of a particular Church is not solely the property of that Church, but belongs to the Universal Church. Every tradition is a unique translation of the Gospel message.

In the growth of the early Church the Greek and Roman cultures had a great influence. The Fathers of the Church made use of these cultures: philosophy, law, etc. The Church of the 21st century is the result of the life and growth of the church for twenty centuries. During that period the Church has absorbed elements of the different cultures. Many of these elements have become part of her universal heritage. It has become impossible to eliminate them without disfiguring her⁸⁷.

There is a big difference between borrowing from extinguished and from still living religions. Fr. Payngot wrote in this way about Fr. Placid Podipara, who was an apostle of authentic inculturation in India:

Placid was for maintaining whatever is of the native culture that had been adopted in the past. As regards introducing new ones he suggested caution because of the possible danger of religious indifferentism. He used to emphasize that whatever is specifically associated with another living religion should not be integrated in the liturgy.... He could not conceive any adaptation outside the mainstream of an organic growth. This is particularly important at a time when ardent reforms are at work on what is known as inculturation by

mimicking Hindu symbols without giving due attention to the philosophy behind... Attempts were also made to prepare an Indian anaphora. In practical life, however, it did not apparently go much beyond wearing a saffron shawl and performing a few external gestures. Regrettably, not much is heard about fasting and other acts of penance that are characteristic of Hindus throughout India.... Fr. Placid used to point out the contradiction in advocating an Indian anaphora while the life-style of the very same people is far from being Indian... The Christians of St. Thomas were not westernized except in matters of liturgy [the latinization]. Father Placid wanted to clear it of alien elements. He rightly pointed out that the East Syrian liturgy had been in use in India from time immemorial and so it is now part of the Indian culture⁸⁸.

When a religion is dead, it is easy to modify the meaning of its symbols and formulae. But such is not the condition in the East. There, philosophy is not a part of religion. Religion is a living force dominating every aspect of life. It is arrogant to think that an insignificant number of Catholics can give a new meaning to formulae and rites of the non-Christian majority. Symbols, expressions and ideas associated with other religions which are not in harmony with the Christian faith or which may create confusion about the christian doctrine are not to be introduced in the liturgy. The Hindu terms and phrases have often a pantheistic doctrine sense. Advocates of inculturation take them out of their original context, give them a vague Christian meaning, and introduce them in

87. Cf. Joannes Paulus II: *Catechesi Tradendae* No 53.

88. Charles Payngot: *Father Placid and Liturgy*, pp. 288-290.

worship. It is worth quoting Spinks' article on an Indian anaphora approved in 1973⁸⁹.

A basic problem is the complexity of Hindu thought, which makes it almost impossible to reduce it to systematic course of development, free from basic contradictions. Amongst Hindu sacred writings we find polytheism, monism, pantheism, monotheism, atheism and dualism existing together, even within the same collection of writings... Even if the Hindu concepts... are congruent with Christian doctrine, can a modern Eucharistic prayer be composed by fitting together archaic phrases, however poetic? Does not an anaphora for India mean an anaphora for the present, and not one for the era of the Rig-Veda, Upanishads or Bhagavad Gita?

The typical example is the use of "om", which is the symbol of Hinduism, as for us the cross and for Muslims the crescent moon. It has even become the symbol of militant Hinduism as opposed to Islam and Christianity. Om is not a synonym for "God" or for one of his attributes. It has many meanings, out of which some might be acceptable to Christianity but in the minds of people it will have all the meanings combined. Certainly included in it is the pantheistic approach of God and the world;

its has also a superstitious use for magic and mantras. Therefore the Congregation for Oriental Churches has prohibited its use: it is the synthesis of all the veda and all gnosis of Hinduism; moreover, it is an essential, integral part of Hindu cult⁹⁰. The Hindus are offended by our borrowing their symbols. They all it "misrepresentations" and "misappropriations of their cherished symbols and sacred traditions"⁹¹. On the contrary, there are many religious customs which Christians have in common with their fellow non-Christian Indians, such as entering places of worship barefoot.

Inculturation of the Early Syro-Malabarians

After a historical study Mar-Abraham Mattam comes to following conclusions.⁹²

1. The first Christians in South India were Jewish settlers who were converted to the Christian faith.

2. When the Jewish believers met together for worship they used the Aramaic or Syriac language.

3. Hinduism was not prevalent in the South, though there might have been some Aryans. The first conversions were mainly from Jainism and Buddhism, there was little influence of Hinduism on the religious

89. Bryan D. Spinks: *The Anaphora for India* ..., pp. 529-549. It is very striking that this article and the book "Christian Ashrams" are carefully avoided in the bibliographies of studies on Inculturation in liturgy and ashrams, such as those of Sebastian Elavathingal, Jacob Mananathodath, and Joseph Prasad Pinto.

90. Communication to the Syro Malabar Bishops on 12.8.1980.

91. *Catholic Ashrams, Adopting and Adapting Hindu Dharma*, ed. Sita Ram Goel, Delhi, 1988, pp. 43, 45 quoted in A. Mattam: *Inculturation*..., p. 126.

92. Abraham Mattam: *Inculturation*..., pp. 86-88. I quote and summarize those which are of interest for our topic.

thought of early Christians in India. Aryanization (with its caste system) of South India did not take place before the eighth century AD. We can prove this from the literature: we find very few Aryan influence in the Dravidian literature of the Sangam (1st-4th C) and Post-Sangam (6th-8th C.) periods. In the eighth century the Dravidian, Buddhist and Jainist religions merged into Hinduism and disappeared. The Aryans adapted much from the local cultures and religions, probably also from Christianity which was very influential in that period. During this gradual evolution, the Christians, who were well versed in trade, agriculture and warfare, managed to keep their high rank and prestige in society, maybe thanks to the protection of their Persian brothers. To cope with the high caste Brahmins, they might have adopted and christianised customs of the high caste Hindus.

4. Because of the commerce there were regular exchanges between the Jewish Christian merchants in South India with Persia and Mesopotamia. They exchanged the developments in their liturgies. The Christians who visited South India must have worshipped together with the local believers.

5. Thomas Cana came in 345 AD. The Syrian immigration took place probably around 800 AD. We cannot imagine that the Christians in Persia remained without contact with Malabar and that after three centuries a group came and introduced an unknown liturgy.

6. The St. Thomas Christians have some customs common with the high caste

Hindus. These considered the Christians highly. Consequently there were conversions among them. The fact that the Thomas Christians had acquired a high status equal with the Nairs in society, and could occupy high ranks in the army, shows that they were fully integrated and respected in the society in which they lived.

Inculturation in Modern India

What concerns India, it is important to keep in mind three things:

1. India is a multicultural country. There are several distinct cultures in India as well as different races that constitute the Indian population. Groups like Dravidians or Dalits are fighting to promote their distinct culture and identity. They speak of "Aryan or Brahmin aggression and imperialism". To promote only the majority's culture may neither be prudent nor just.

2. There are several religions in India. Those who embrace Christianity in India come from various religions. Incorporating in the liturgy elements from one religion may be unacceptable to those coming from another and even to those who are converted from the religion from which the elements are borrowed! Many scheduled and backward castes and tribals have their own religion. They constitute 70% of the population. Dalits are careful to avoid even appearances of being Hindu by not putting *kumkum* on the forehead of women, by not celebrating *Diwali* or *Onam*, while Christians often do. Some say that these feasts have lost their original religious significance and have become

purely cultural celebrations. But Diwali is not only a festival of lights, but a feast of the goddess Lakshmi with pujas and processions as essential parts of the celebration. If Christmas is transferred to this day, Christ will be downgraded: He will get a place alongside the Hindu divinities. But this is maybe what the inculturalists aim at.

3. Christianity has been in India from the early centuries. Christianity has been in India before Zoroastrianism and Islam, before Sankara preached Hinduism. Leaders such as Nehru recognize Christianity as a part of the Indian heritage. Christianity in India is older than in many other countries. Christianity came to be associated with the West because of the Protestant missions who imposed on their converted Western customs, even the less praisable ones, such as dancing, drinking, eating beef, etc. In Delhi the Syrians are considered as Indianised, the Latins as Westernised Christians.

The Chaldean liturgy, since it has kept the Semitic features, is closer to Christianity as preached by Christ and the apostles, whereas other liturgies present a hellenized or romanized image. The East Syrian rite has later drawn elements from cultures other than the Semitic one, like the Persian, Arabian and Aryan ones. But all these cultures have much in common, all are Asian. So this liturgy is naturally at home in India, where exists a confluence of

Dravidian, Semitic, Aryan, Arabian, and other cultures. Only it has to be adapted to the cultural and linguistic diversities existing in the country, especially in those areas where Christianity is introduced. Especially things which could shock have to be avoided: in the liturgy. e.g., the way of kissing objects, but also in social life, e.g., the eating of certain types of meat, even if this imposes sacrifices on the missionaries.

This form of Christianity and liturgy was able to spread over the whole of Asia. Actually together with the Antiochean rite it is *the* Asian liturgy. It has disappeared due to persecutions, but its rapid spread shows that it was adapted to the Asian mind. It did not give the impression of a Western imposition, contrary to the Latin way of Christianity (liturgy, piety and life style). The process of inculturation suffered a set back during the colonial period when the Western form of Christianity was imposed upon the newly evangelized nations. Paul VI himself has admitted that at several occasions⁹³. He tried to project the right image of the Church by affirming that she is not of any particular nation or culture and that she does not intend to impose the traits of the so-called Western culture.⁹⁴

Only for reasons of necessary and organic growth, are changes to be introduced. Just as here cannot be a Church which is truly 'indigenous' to a place, but it must always derive from another existing Church, so also there is no indigenous liturgy⁹⁵. The *Instruction for applying the*

93. E.g., address to Prelates of Africa and Madagascar, 26.9.1975, OS 9.10.1975, p.3.

94. Cf. address to Ambassadors to Holy See from United Arab Republic, 12.10.1968, AAS 60(1968), p. 724; address to Ambassador to Holy See from Democratic Republic of Congo, 14. 10.1968, AAS 60 (1968), p. 731;

95. *Report on the State of Liturgical Reform in the Syro-Malabar Church* (1980), introduction.

Liturgical Prescriptions of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches says in no. 18:

The first requirement of every Eastern liturgical renewal... is that of rediscovering full fidelity to their own liturgical traditions⁹⁶, benefitting from their riches and eliminating that which has altered their authenticity. Such heedfulness is not subordinate to but precedes so-called updating.

It also teaches that a liturgical renewal needs the observation of certain criteria (no.20) :

In modifying ancient liturgical practice, it must be determined if the element to be introduced is coherent with the contextual meaning in which it is placed. Such a contact should be understood beginning with eventual references to sacred scripture, interpretations of the holy fathers, liturgical reforms previously made and mystical catechesis. Here it must be verified that the new change is homogenous with the symbolical language, the images and the style specific to the liturgy of the particular Church.

The Instruction (no 29) at the same point quotes the Pope :

Do not adhere with excessive improvisation to the limitation of cultures and traditions which are not your own, thus betraying the sensibility of your own people.⁹⁷

It concludes:

Any unnecessary differentiation between the liturgical books of the Eastern Catholic Churches and those of Orthodox should be avoided.

The Oriental Congregation made a very exact diagnostic of the spiritual sickness which affects a number of experts in India in its *Report on the State of Liturgical Reform in the Syro-Malabar Church* (1980):

The crisis around the liturgy in the Malabar Church is.... a revealing and conspicuous one of a much vaster and involved theological and spiritual debate investing the Catholic Church today, so that it would be a mistake to lose sight of this pan-Indian dimension. It would seem that the crux or supreme point of the contemporary theological debate in India concerns Christology, the absolute character and centrality of Christ... In the same context, one notes too a certain undervaluing for inappreciation of the theological value of the Patristic tradition... In some quarters it is held and taught that non-Christian religions are 'complementary' to Christianity and they are no less true than Christianity, since Christ operates in all religions. In the same vein, some authors in India are inclined to recognize in non-Christian scriptures a divine origin and inspiration and desire to use such scriptures in the liturgy...⁹⁸

96. The Instruction asks explicitly for the restoration of the anaphoras fallen into oblivion (No. 54), due to their importance. For the celebration of the Eucharist, the Syro Malabar Church at present has only one anaphora. the two other traditional anaphoras should be restored and reformed, cf. F. Kanichikattil: *To Restore...*, pp. 116f. For the restoration of the Anaphora of Mar Nestorius the principle exposed to me by Jamno could be followed: to remove from the fourth and fifth ghanata the supplicatory portions borrowed from kussape. This will make this anaphora notably shorter.

97. Homily during the Prayer of Incense of to the Alexandrino-Coptic Rite on 14.8.1988, OR 16-17.8.1988, p.5.

98. In *Roman Documents...*, p.14.

It radically refused the two prepared rites for "Indian Mass" saying:

These two liturgies certainly cannot be considered a reform or an organic development of the Syriac liturgies: in fact, they preserve neither the structures, nor the tone, nor the spirit.⁹⁹

It gives then a detailed critic of their different parts. A little further, it gives the principles for a sound restoration: serious study of the liturgical and patristic heritage; a serious study of Hinduism. It points out that one should not forget the radical difference between Hinduism and Christianity. If one pretends to ignore them or makes false parallels, he is unjust to both religions. The task is not that of taking up things from the Hindu heritage, but that of deepening the Christian values: the sense of the transcendence of God and of His presence, the self-abandonment to God, the value of the sacraments as places of encounter with God, the value of prayer of which the highest form is not the solitary contemplation but the Eucharist, the veneration of the Scripture, reverence for asceticism and poverty.¹⁰⁰

With some irony the document (nos 1g and 2) observed that:

In this reductionism one can perceive a certain hostility to elements which are at the basis of the spirit of this rite - as if the Semitic, Chaldean elements in use in India for so many centuries were "foreign" - although, ironically, the same hesitation is not observed when it comes to introducing

novelties invented in the West, less than 20 years ago. Hence these directions are judged to show little truly critical, scientific, theological, biblical, pastoral and anthropological studies¹⁰¹.

Inculturation of the Liturgy, Task for the Indian Churches

Liturgy is one of the main sources from which the faithful are to derive the Christian spirit. Therefore they must be able to understand its texts and gestures. The council wanted therefore to simplify the liturgy, making it more adapted to contemporary culture, by making people to participate more actively in the celebration. They should not only be spectators, but should involve actively. This is not simply an ecclesial precept, but derives from the nature of the liturgy itself; it is the faithful's right and duty by reason of their baptism. Therefore the Church made the heavy sacrifice of the latin language.

The liturgical reform envisaged by the council includes as an essential element adaptation of the liturgy to the cultural situations of the people. Not only those churches whose liturgies are foreign to their cultures, but all churches whose liturgies with the passage of time have become to some extent estranged from the culture of the people are in need of adaptation, mostly by translating and simplifying them¹⁰². It is the young churches in mission lands which follow the Roman rite that stand most in need of adaptation to the culture and traditions of their people (SC 37-38), their

99. *Roman Documents...*, p.21.

100. Two points of Indian spirituality are usually forgotten by the inculturators: *Roman Documents...*, p.29-32

101. Congregation for the Oriental Churches: Observations on "The Order of the Holy Mass of the Syro Malabar Church 1981", nos 1g and 2 in *Roman Documents...*, p. 60.

102. There is contradiction in the promoters of inculturation, they are against all use of Syriac words in the liturgy, but want words taken from the Hindu vocabulary to be introduced, cf. F. Kanichikattil: *To Restore...*

rite is less incarnated because at the time when the Roman Liturgy appeared, many Hellenistic and Roman elements were incorporated in it. When in the Middle Ages it spread itself across Europe, it adapted itself again to the culture and traditions of the new peoples, the Franks and other Germanic tribes. But when later on the Roman liturgy was taken from Europe to the New World and mission lands, such an adaptation was not made.¹⁰³

During his first visit to India, Paul VI asked the people to "express their faith and devotion in harmony with the civilization of India and in truly Indian forms" and added that if efforts were made in that direction, the Church, having gathered the varied treasures of many cultures of East and West, would "be further enriched by the contribution of her Indian sons, drawn from their country's rich and ancient cultural traditions"¹⁰⁴.

Conclusion

Inculturation signifies presenting the gospel and fashioning Christian life in a way adapted to the culture of the local people. It is more than purely external adaptation. It has a double dimension: firstly, all authentic values and good elements of the culture are integrated into Christianity (ascending line); secondly, the gospel values are transmitted to the culture, purifying it (descending line). The question of inculturation has a different meaning and application according to the place where the Gospel is preached. We cannot ignore that the Church is no longer in her infant stage. She has got 19 centuries of growth. She possesses the wealth of the writings of the Fathers, a developed form of worship, and the decisions of the Magisterium. When the Syro Malabar Church goes to evangelize, she

has to carry with her all the spiritual richness she has accumulated during the centuries. In new mission territories she has to carry out a degree of local adaptation, especially as regards the language, music, architecture, and social customs, especially those concerning birth, marriage, funerals and feasts. Certain adaptations might even be obligatory: things which otherwise shock, such as the way of kissing objects, the manner of giving peace, the way in which the priests receive the Precious Blood. The reason for these adaptations is that in certain cultures, such as the Semitic and the Indian ones, saliva is considered as impure.

As a conclusion we can rightly appropriate the words of the Melkite patriarch Maximos IV:

In principle, we agree that it is necessary to adapt the liturgy to the changing conditions of place and time; however, we deem it opportune for the Orient to stress two observations: the first is that the Catholic Oriental Churches must abstain today for more than one reason from developing their rites independently from the agreement with the corresponding Orthodox branches, in order to avoid the creation of new difference vis-a-vis of our separated brethren. Liturgical adaptation can only be performed in agreement with them. The second observation is that the efforts for liturgical adaptation should not be exaggerated up to obsession. Like the inspired texts, the liturgical rites have a permanent value, in spite of the circumstances from which they originated. Before a rite is touched, one must be sure that the change is absolutely necessary.¹⁰⁶

103. H. Schmidt, *La Constituci on sobre la S. Liturgia*, Barcelona, 1996, p. 296.

104. Paul VI: Homily during mass at Bombay 4.12.1964.

DID APOSTLE THOMAS REALLY TOUCH THE WOUNDED SIDE OF JESUS?

G. Kaniarakath, cmi

We know that the Gospels are not biographies of Jesus, but proclamations about the person, deeds, and words of Jesus with their significance for human salvation. Hence, sometimes, we have to read between the lines to get a realistic picture of things. It is the Fourth Gospel alone which tells us something about Apostle Thomas. As in the other three Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles he is a mere name; though we have some literature on him in the apocrypha¹. In the Fourth Gospel Thomas appears on some four important occasions often having a special role to play. The most important episodes in which Thomas becomes crucial are the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus to the ten and then to Thomas in the presence of the other apostles. John tells us that Thomas was absent when Jesus appeared to the disciples the first time after his resurrection. The other disciples reported the matter to Thomas who refused to believe. The condition of Thomas for believing was too much: "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe" (Jn 20:25). Even though Thomas is said to have made such a demand, when actually Jesus

appeared, he declared his faith in the divinity of Jesus in a way that is unique in the NT. Here there is no hint of Thomas having touched the wounded side of Jesus, but unfortunately, a misleading and quiet unjohannine picture of Thomas has continued even from the early centuries.

Fathers and Apocrypha

A false picture of Apostle Thomas came to be circulated in early Christian literature. St. Ignatius Theophorus of Antioch in Syria who was a bishop in the subapostolic age (+ 107) wrote seven letters of which one is to the Smyrneans. In this letter the risen Jesus asks Peter and others to touch him to be convinced that he was still in actual flesh. And Ignatius adds that "they immediately touched him and believed" (no.3)². However, we know that the letter was written in the context of docetism which held that Jesus only appeared like a man though, according to the fourth Gospel the Word became flesh and dwelt among us; he did not merely appear like a man, but became a human person in fact. Again from the second century we have the *Epistola apostolorum* in which the apostles are said to have thought of the risen Jesus as a

1. Such are The Gospel of Thomas, The Infancy Gospel of Thomas, The Acts of Thomas, The Apocalypse of Thomas and The Book of Thomas the Athlete.
 2. Early Christian Writings. The Apostolic Fathers, trans. M. Staniforth, Middlesex, 1968.
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phantom. The letter reports that Jesus invited the disciples including Peter who denied him thrice to touch and see that he was the crucified and risen Jesus himself. They approached him doubting in their hearts whether it were he. Then he assured that he was the one who spoke to them about his flesh, death and resurrection. Then Jesus asked Peter to put his finger into the print of the nails in his hands, and Thomas was invited to put his finger into the wound of the spear in his side. Again Andrew was told to look on his feet and see whether they press the earth as it is written in the prophet: "A phantom of a devil maketh no footprint on the earth... And they touched him, that they might learn of a truth whether he were risen flesh and they fell on their faces confessing their sin, that they had been unbelieving" (11-12)³. St. Ephrem⁴ in his commentary on the Diatessaron also speaks about Thomas as having touched the body of Jesus as a condition of faith: "Since she (Mary) doubted His Resurrection, He forbade her to touch Him; but behold, Thomas who doubted Him yet touched Him". Again in his Hymns on Faith we read about Thomas that "if this one is blamed because (naively) he dared to scrutinize and to believe"⁵. The idea is carried on in the Hymns on the Apostle Thomas and the Membra for New Sunday⁶. Perhaps, we have here the origin of the pseudo-picture of Thomas which is not from the Fourth Gospel. It also gave

rise to false icons and pictures from the fifth century which depicted Thomas as "incredulous" and testing the side of Jesus. The pity is that it has taken place also in the cathedrals and shrines of the St. Thomas Christians in India.

The Johannine picture

In the first post-resurrection appearance of Jesus to the apostles, according to John, Thomas was absent and strangely no reason is given for that. The synoptic Gospels suppose that all were present except Judas. It is reported in John that "Jesus showed his hands and side" (20:20) for which also no explanation is given. It is also to be noted that John alone speaks about the pierced hands and the wounded side of Jesus, obviously related to the Johannine mention of the piercing of the heart of Jesus with a lance (Jn 19:34). Luke who has some similarities to John presents Jesus as inviting the Apostles to look at his hands and feet (24:39).

When the disciples inform Thomas about the appearance of Jesus in his absence, he responds with a double negative: "unless I see... and put... I will not believe." One could legitimately speculate on the negative reaction of Thomas whose loyalty to the Lord was so great that he preferred to die with Jesus than live without him, when Jesus invited disciples to undertake a very dangerous journey to Bethany (Jn 11:16). Yet he alone is denied the joy of meeting

3. The Apocryphal New Testament, trans, M.R. James, Oxford, 1924, pp. 488-89.

4. Diatessaron, XXI, 27.

5. St. Ephrem, Hymns on Faith, 7.11.

6. cfr. Youssif, P., "The Apostle Thomas in C. Paygnot (ed), *Homage to Cariattil*. Pioneer Malabar Ecumenist, Rome, 1987, pp. 82ff. n the Witness of Saint Ephrem of Nisibis."

the risen master. He could not understand why this privilege was denied to him. Jesus is kind to Thomas and offers him that joy after a week in the presence of the other disciples. He is asked to do what he precisely wanted, though he wanted more than what the others were given; they only saw Jesus, he is pictured as demanding to test the identity of the crucified and risen Jesus. But Thomas is taken up by the very appearance and makes the clearest profession of faith in the divinity of Jesus that is found in the New Testament. He exclaimed: "My Lord and my God!" We have here a very personal acceptance of Jesus as the Lord, Yahweh (Heb.) or Kyrios (Gr.) which is the Old Testament name for God. For Thomas Jesus is Lord and God.

The Fourth Gospel in no ways hints that Thomas touched the side of Jesus. With R.E. Brown and others⁷, we feel that Thomas did not make such a test. According to the Fourth Gospel such a faith should have been inadequate and the author of the Fourth Gospel would not have put in his mouth such a tremendous confession of faith if he tried the hard test apparently wanted. Of all the apostles of Jesus, Thomas is the most misunderstood and misrepresented in Christian tradition of thinking and art. Here we may distinguish between the historical Thomas, the Johannine Thomas and the popular Thomas. It is true that we cannot pinpoint to the Thomas of history and say that he was like that or like this. From the Gospel

accounts we may have a probable picture of the apostle. Since John alone gives some prominence to Thomas, we presume that he was important for the Johannine community and that he is given a special role in the revelation of Jesus. According to the Synoptic Gospels, at least some of the disciples failed to recognize the risen Jesus and this is reflected in John in his statement that "he showed them his hands and his side" (20:20) similar to what we read in Lk 24:37-39. What John has done is to separate the doubt into another episode and personify it on Thomas. Hence the doubt of the disciples is here focused on Thomas. Thomas' doubt is an acted out misunderstanding as explained by R.E. Brown⁸. However, John does not do any injustice as Thomas also may be among those who doubted. Besides, he has put into the mouth of the apostle the great profession of faith. The evangelist did it as a means of emphasizing the tangible character of Jesus' body.

The Johannine presentation of Thomas became more dramatic in the apologetic context of early Christianity and Thomas and others are shown as having touched the body of Jesus, even his wounds. This idea was popularized in the icons and other artistic representations⁹. We feel that it is high time to do away with such fancies. We feel it too much to think that Apostle Thomas put his fingers into the wound of his Master.

7. 1977, p. 614; Marshal, J., Saint John, P. 646.

8. Brown, R.E., The Gospel According to John XII-XI, p. 1046.

9. From the fifth c. we have art representations depicting Thomas as "incredulous" and touching the wounded side of Jesus. Cfr H. Leclercq, "Thomas (incredulite)," in DACL, vol 15 (1953), pp. 2274-75; S. Muratori, "La piu antica rappresentazione della incredulitadi San Tommaso," NBArch 17 (1911), pp. 39-58.

BOOK REVIEW

‘Church and Sacraments’

By Prof. O. M. Mathew Oruvattithara

Ecclesiology is that branch of theology which seeks to give a scientific disposition of the various dimensions of the ‘One, Holy, Apostolic and Catholic Church.’ Thanks to Vatican’s insistence to re-discover the ‘resources’ of the Church. Ecclesiology has begun to attract the attention of scholars, both Occidental and Oriental. Many a new vista has been opened in this field, as a result of the study of the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant ecclesiologists.

The small treatise captioned ‘Church and Sacraments’ authored by Prof. O.M. Mathew of the M.G. University, Kottayam, is an attempt in this line. Though not a professional theologian, the tutoring Prof. O.M. Mathew received in the Mar Thomas Vidya Niketan, Changanacherry, Kerala, has imbued in him a sound and solid orientation towards the ‘Mother Church’. This is very evident in his work. The author views the Church as an ‘Icon of Trinity’ having the roots in the Scriptures, the Tradition and the Magisterium, For him the Church is neither an entity of power nor a juridical institution. He contends that it is a ‘Sacramental Organism’. Naturally he asserts that “life without or outside the ‘Church’ is aimless, rudderless, hollow, solitary and squalid. The Church is man’s bosom friend, companion in solitude, a mother in all seasons of distress, an oasis in life’s wilderness and an intercessor in his life in the world to come.” Prof. Mathew has dwelt with 124 subjects having bearing on ecclesiology, in five chapters. The style is candid and the treatment of the subjects coherent. As occasions warrant the author has juxtaposed the views of Roman Catholic with those of the Orthodox and the Protestant Churches.

After going through the book one would nod his or her head to the comments of the Rev. Sr. Sophy Rose CMC, who initiated the author into ecclesiology, that this book is the outcome of his wide reading. So also, one would agree to the remarks of the ‘Forward’ by Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Panicker, the former Rector of the Saint Joseph’s Pontifical Institute of Theology Aluva, Kerala that Prof. Mathew has brought out very well Saint Cyprian’s views on the Ecclesia.

The Bull of His Holiness Ignatius Zakka II was, Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, that is incorporated in the work under review, is an encomium for both the author and the citadel that moulded him. Besides it is a testimony of the ethos of Ecumenism.

This small treatise is a must for a student of Ecclesiology as a source and reference.

SEERI the well renowned Research Institute, Baker Hill, Kottayam, Kerala has done a marvelous service to the ‘Mother Church’ by publishing this venture of Prof. Mathew in the form of a book costing Rs. 95/- per copy.

Jose Mullenkuzy M.A.R.S.

NEWS

CHALDEANS IN THE UNITED STATES:

NEW DIOCESE

Vatican Press Bulletin announced the establishment of a new eparchy (diocese) for the Chaldean Catholics living in the United States of America. It is called Eparchy of Saint Peter the Apostle of San Diego (California). It was until now the western part of the Eparchy of Saint Thomas the Apostle of Detroit (Michigan). Rev. Dr. Sarhad Jammo, Professor at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome and the University of Detroit, so far protosyncellus (Vicar General) of St. Thomas eparchy and Parish priest at Troy, Michigan, will be the first bishop of the new eparchy which will have its headquarters at El Cajon in the neighbourhood of San Diego. Born at Baghdad in 1941, he went to Rome in 1958. In 1964, he obtained the Licentiates in Philosophy and in Theology as well as the doctorate in Liturgy at the Pontifical Oriental Institute with a dissertation on the initial part of Holy Qurbana. In the same year he was ordained to the priesthood. After having served in the pastoral ministry and as professor at the patriarchal seminary and the monastery of St. Hormisdas, he came to the United States in 1977. Dr. Jammo is a member of the Patriarchal Liturgical Commission, of the Ecumenical Commission for the Assyro-Chaldean Dialogue and engaged in the activities of the Pro Oriente Foundation in Vienna.

POPE VISITS THE HISTORIC MONASTERY OF ST. JOHN OF RILA

His Holiness Pope John Paul II during his Apostolic visit to Bulgaria in May 2002, payed tribute to the Orthodox Monastery of St. John of Rila. He qualified it as the "spiritual heart" of Bulgaria, which kept the flame of faith burning always. Pope was thereby giving public expression to all the Eastern Monasteries, catholic and non-catholic. Monasteries are the cradles of spiritual formation. Pope John Paul II referred to the role of Monasteries in the following words:

"The art of spiritual combat, the discernment of spirits, the sharing of one's thoughts with one's spiritual director, the invocation of the holy name of Jesus and his mercy must once more become a part of the inner life of the disciple of the Lord".

INCREASE OF VOCATION TO MONASTIC LIFE

An Italian monthly report of increase of vocations in Monastic traditions, especially of the Benedictine tradition. While the traditional religious congregations suffer from shortage of vocations, the Monastic traditions witness a growth in vocation. One reason mentioned is the atmosphere of spiritual life in Monastic Communities, which is more genuine and lively than in religious congregations.

REV.DR. JOSEPH PERUMTHOTTAM AUXILIARY TO THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CHANGANACHERRY

Rev.Dr. Joseph Perumthottam has been consecrated auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Changanacherry of the Syro-Malabar Archiepiscopal Church, India. The consecration was on May20, 2002. The chief consecrator was His Grace Mar Joseph Powathil, the Archbishop of Changanacherry, and the co-consecrators were His Grace Mar George Valiamattam of Tellicherry and Mar Joseph Pallickkaparampil, the bishop of Pala. About 35 archbishops and bishops, hundreds of Priests concelebrated in the sacred ceremonies.

Born on July5, 1948, the new bishop was ordained a priest in 1974 by the Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil. He did his doctoral research in Church History in Rome and after returning home he was given charge of the Director of Sandesanilayam and later in 1990 he became the first director of Mar Thoma Vidyanikethan, a theological Institute for the Laity. He continued in his post until the appointment as the auxiliary bishop. He was also on the teaching staff of Paurastya Vidyapitham.

ONE MORE AUXILIARY BISHOP TO ERNAKULAM ARCHDIOCESE

Msgr. Sebastian Adayanthrath has been appointed as the auxiliary bishop of Ernakulam - Angamaly Archdiocese. With his appointment Ernakulam has at present two auxiliary bishops. His Episcopal ordination was on 20th April 2002. His Eminence Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil was the chief consecrator and bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. John Michael Sheelock, bishop of London Diocese, Canada, also concelebrated.

After his priestly ordination, he worked in several parishes of the Archdiocese and also served the then Cardinal Anthony Padiyara as his secretary. Later he was sent to Canada to work as the Director of the 'Save a Family Scheme'. There he worked for 14 years until his appointment as the auxiliary bishops. We wish him all success in the new mission.

Christian Orient is immensely grateful to the outgoing editors Rev.Dr. Verghese Pathikulangara and Rev. Fr. Lonappen Arangacherry. Rev.Dr. Varghese Pathikulangara was the section editor since 1981 and Rev.Fr. Lonappen Arangacherry was the section editor from 1993 onwards. We extend hearty welcome to the new section editors Rev.Dr. Andrews Mekkattukunnel and Rev.Dr. Jose Kochuparampil. We hope that Christian Orient will be much enriched by their valuable contributions and service.